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No.7 September 85p

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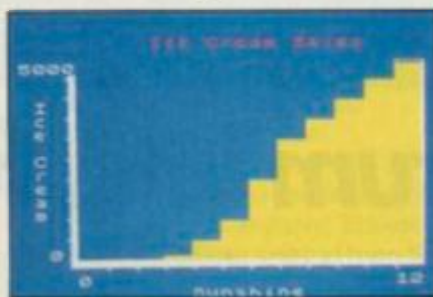
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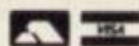
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FRONT LINES

THE MEGA-GAME'S UP!

Following months of speculation, Liverpool-based software house, Imagine, has finally bitten the dust. Rumoured to have been struggling for quite some time and now having run out of money and excuses, the company has finally been placed into the hands of the official receiver.

The reasons for failure are not likely to be known in any detail until the dust has cleared, but poor sales and a failed contract with publisher Marshall Cavendish were two major contributors to Imagine's downfall. Other contracts which Imagine was rumoured to be negotiating — with Apple and IBM — failed to materialise in time to save the company.

The deal with Marshall Cavendish was to supply software for *INPUT* — a partwork publication dedicated to the art of writing your own games. Accepting the advance of a reported £200,000, Imagine reputedly invested the same amount again in equipment to handle the job — which explains why, when Marshall Cavendish rejected the games, Imagine was left out of pocket to the tune of £400,000.

In a drastic move calculated to lift Imagine's financial situation out of the mire, the company attempted to auction off its entire range of best-selling (sic) titles. K-Tel, Prism and Virgin Software were reported to be interested parties; eventually, however, a deal was signed with distributor, Beau-Jolly. This landed Imagine in court with rival distributor Zeta Services which claimed to hold a contract giving it sole rights to the titles. Imagine made a counter-claim that Zeta had breached the contract by refusing to take delivery of existing stocks by the agreed date.



Cassette anyone? Imagine ex-director Bruce Everiss zooms off to form a new company.

Meanwhile, back at Imagine's HQ, Technical Director Bruce Everiss (who resigned from the company, along with Information Manager Tim Best just a week before liquidation) informed us that he was in disagreement with the three other directors. Interviewed after the crash, Everiss commented that financial mismanagement was a factor in the failure of the company; Financial Director Ian Hetherington felt moved to say little in reply to Everiss' 'off the record' claims, but blamed the collapse on the overheads incurred by the Marshall Cavendish contract. Mention was also made of piracy of Imagine products; Hetherington claims that 300,000-400,000 pirated tapes were uncovered not long ago. (Could this be the first official mention of the oft-rumoured 'find' of bootlegs in a London warehouse back in January? Ed.)

As the smoke clears amid predictable acrimony, perhaps the biggest question of all is

what will happen to the so-called Mega-games — the project on which the company was devoting much of its time and resources. Due for release sometime in August at a price of £40 each, the games are said to offer graphics midway between ordinary micro graphics and the type of laser-disk realism seen in the amusement arcades. Modestly, Bruce Everiss was heard to say that "The Mega-games will make all other products obsolete overnight...." — a comment that seems to have back-fired somewhat.

The rights to the Mega-games already in progress when Imagine went into liquidation are now the property of the official receiver, representing a company asset which can be used to pay the estimated £1/4 million owed to creditors. The intellectual rights to the concept, however, remain the property of the copyright holders.

And this is where the plot thickens, for the 18-strong programming team of Imagine will apparently be joining

former directors Ian Hetherington, Mark Butler and David Lawson, in the formation of a new company. Hetherington confirmed that the rights to the existing Mega-games are now the property of the receiver, but hinted that the new (and as yet unnamed) company would be creating its own Mega-games. Which might go some way to explaining the rumours that are flying around that Imagine's ex-programming team is presently holed up in a secret location putting the finishing touches to *Bandasnatch*. The job is reported to be 80 per cent complete.

Bruce Everiss, too, is setting up his own, separate, company but wouldn't at press time get down to the nitty-gritty of telling us what it'll be doing; under existing law, there's nothing to prevent former directors of a liquidated company acting as directors of a new company.

Watch this space for news of the emergent companies, when and if they appear.

TEXT ON YOUR TELLY

A new Teletext adaptor is now available for both the 16K and 48K Spectrum, thus giving Spectrum users all the facilities of the four Teletext channels at a fraction of the cost of a special Teletext TV. The TTX 2000 adaptor costs £145 and includes a power adaptor, ZX Interface cable and detailed instructions.

The maker, OE Ltd, happens too to be designer and manufacturer of the Prism VTX 5000 modem (which won the 1984 'Peripheral of the Year' award) and the company has also announced plans for a telesoftware program to allow all TTX 2000 users to receive and download specially broadcast software — rather like the BBC is trying out at the moment on Ceefax. The downloader facility will be available as an upgrade ROM.

GETTING THE HUMP

Camel Products has been hard at work producing even more hardware additions for the humble Speccy — this time, its four new products all relate to the use of EPROMs.

Camel's first release is the PROMER-SP, which allows the programming and checking of 8K and 16K EPROMs. Next up is the ROM-SP; this lets you load and run EPROMs from power-up, without making use of the Spectrum's own ROM. The last two devices are EPROM erasers — designated the DHOB1 and DHOB2, the latter also includes a tuner.

For the inside information, contact Camel Products; telephone 0223 314814.

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QL AFFAIRS

Presented by Leon Heller, Acting Chairman of the Independent QL Users' Group (IQLUG).

OPERATING WITH A DIFFERENCE

GST Computer Systems Ltd of Cambridge has announced 68K/OS, an operating system for the QL that appears to offer considerably more than the standard QDOS operating system provided with the machine. According to GST, Sinclair Research commissioned it in February 1983 to produce a new operating system for an OEM version of the QL. 'OEM' (Original Equipment Manufacturer) generally refers to a company that purchases something, then subsequently enhances it in some way for resale to an end user.

GST is negotiating with Sinclair Research for the rights to sell the QL as a single board computer (minus case, keyboard, Microdrives and power supply) with the 68K/OS operating system to OEMs who wish to use it for such application areas as computer aided design, terminal emulation, data acquisition, point of sale, etc. Features offered by 68K/OS include: single-user, multi-tasking; multiple screen windows; highly optimised disk filing system; device independent I/O; Unix-like 'pipes' for communication

between programs; built-in menu and form handling; command or menu-driven 'shell'; integral graphics functions; and ROM resident (32K). Many of these features were in the original specification for the QL, but have since been left out of the machines that Sinclair Research is currently 'shipping'.

GST is negotiating too with several other software houses for the provision of the following languages: Basic, 'C', Pascal, Fortran 77 and MC68000 assembler. It's also planned to make available business software similar to the bundled Psion packages.

GST intends making 68K/OS available to QL users (no comment as to the likely cost), and has promised evaluation copies some time in August. These will take the form of a couple of EPROMs that replace those in the machine — with some additional code on a Microdrive cartridge.

It'll be interesting to see how 68K/OS fares against QDOS. Certainly, although punters will be forking out monies over and above the cost of the basic QL system, they'll get some very attractive features. It all boils down to how much it costs, and how long it takes for the additional programming

languages to become available. It might be that 68K/OS will be bought by people who are writing QL software, which is then sold to the ordinary user to run under QDOS.

LIFE WITH THE LIONS

Software house, Joe The Lion continues to threaten us with the possibility of a Spectrum simulator for the QL. We're assured that the code to emulate Z80 operation on the MC68008 is working, and running as fast as a 4MHz Z80! The company is now designing the hardware to allow Spectrum cassettes to be loaded into the QL. Emulating the Z80 doesn't present too great a problem, but it's still impossible to believe it can be got running that fast. We'll all be delighted to be wrong.

LOOK WHAT I GOT!

If you want to see what version ROMs you have in your QL, just type PRINT VERS. If the machine responds 'AH', congratulations, you have the latest ROMs, which means that the operating system and SuperBASIC are essentially bug-free. 'PM' means that there are several bugs, and 'FB' indicates virtual infestation!

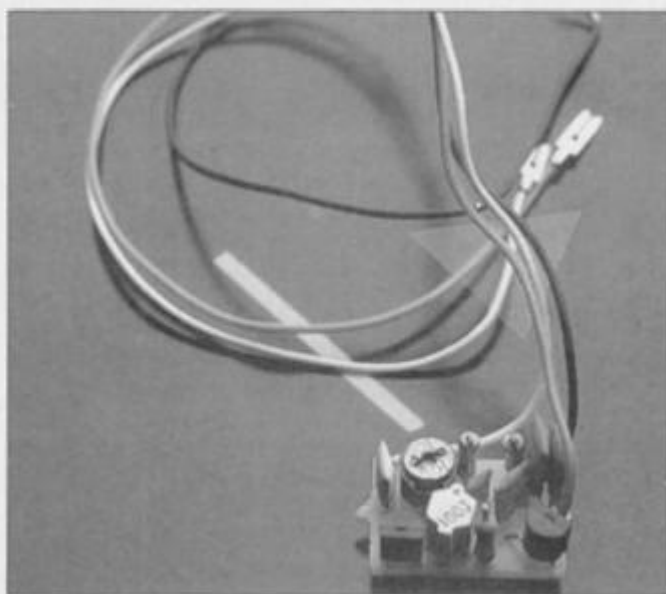
IQLUG is a non-profit making independent QL users' group. Further details on the organisation are available from: Brian Pain, Acting Secretary, IQLUG, 24 Oxford Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, Bucks. Tel: 0908 564271.

BETTER BEEPING

Compusound has produced a Telesound gizmo that allows beeps, keyboard clicks and so on, to be played through the loudspeaker of your television set; the device is so small, it fits easily inside the Spectrum's case. It also has the advantage of allowing (unintentionally) programs to be loaded or saved without unplugging leads.

Retailing at £9.95, Telesound is fitted by plugging the wires on to various parts of the internal circuitry as directed; this means that if ever your Spectrum needs to be repaired under guarantee, the unit can be removed — leaving no trace that it had ever been installed.

Anyone interested in one of these sound boosters should write to Compusound at 32-33 Langley Close, Redditch, Wores; telephone enquiries on 0527 21429.



HEY BIG SPENDERS

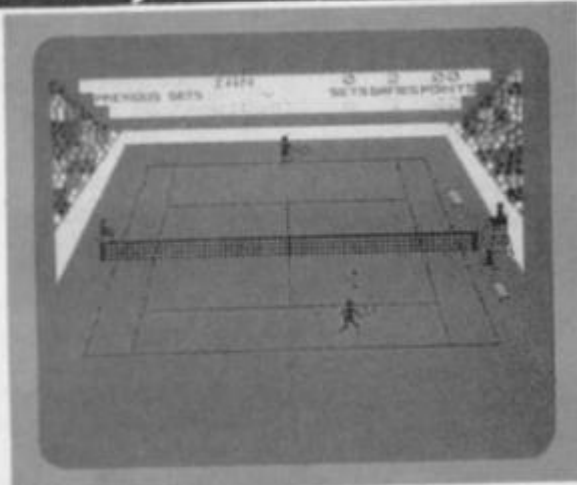
Taking the bit firmly between its teeth, Sinclair Research is going on the offensive with an ad campaign — complete with TV coverage — worth over £4 million. The campaign is based on claims that the 41.5K of usable memory you get on the Spectrum is greater than computers costing up to three times as much. Another major incentive for purchasers will be the give-away 'goodies'.

Free with each 48K Spectrum will come the 'Spectrum Six Pack' — a software bundle worth £56.70 which features *Chequered Flag*, *Scrabble*, *Survival*, *Chess*, *Make-a-Chip* and *Horace Goes Skiing*. You'll also be able to buy an 'Expansion System' package for £99.95 giving you proud possession of a ZX Microdrive, the Interface 1 unit and a wallet of four Microdrive cartridges; these contain *Tasman II*, *Masterfile*, *3D Ant Attack*, *Games Designer*, and a number of Microdrive demonstration and utility programs.

For anyone at all sceptical of the Spectrum's future in the micro market, Sinclair Research has announced that it's doubling production. This, the company claims, will allow production to ramp up to over 200,000 units per month by the end of the year.

Announced too is the retail availability of both the QL and the flat-screen TV from September. Managing Director Nigel Searle says that "While production volumes for both are building up fast, we anticipate that demand will inevitably outstrip supply." Which presumably means that supplies in the shops may well be limited.

GAME, SET AND MATCH POINT



Anyone for tennis? Sinclair Research may have missed the Wimbledon deadline, but the game's well worth a look.

Well, the Wimbledon fortnight is long since past, but for those who just can't wait until next year, Sinclair Research has brought out a new tennis game called *Match Point* — to help you while away those long winter hours.

"You cannot be serious...", I hear you say! Yes, it's true. Menu options include a choice of one, three or five sets, playing human, versus human, human versus Spectrum or Spectrum

playing itself in an exhibition match. Playing speed increases considerably as you proceed through the quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals, and all the rules of tennis are obeyed. Some nice touches in the game include ballboys running out to collect balls from the net, the crowd looking appreciatively from end to end as the ball is played, and the loser throwing down his racket and clasping

hands to head!

The graphics are very good and the Spectrum plays a very good, tactical game — even at the lowest level; in the higher levels, it even manages to somehow anticipate where you're going to hit the ball.

Overall, this is an excellent and realistic simulation, just as much as it's a very playable game. Priced at £7.95, *Match Point* is available from all Spectrum games retailers.

CUT PRICE STORE

For all those who want reasonably priced mass storage, there's good news from Radofin — manufacturers of the Aquarius; it's just announced its new Spectrum compatible disk drive. Known as the Quick Disk, it should be available in the shops around the end of August for just £129.

The unit makes use of a 2.8-inch disk which is divided into 40 sectors of 1280 bytes, giving an overall capacity of 102K when formatted (51.2K × 2) or 144K (72K × 2). The DOS includes the usual CATALOGUE, COPY and ERASE commands.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

Following our toolkit review of last month, a new one has been rushed to our attention. Supercode II is an updated version of the original Supercode (*Well, I never! Ed.*) from CP Software and it's sporting no fewer than 120 machine code routines.

Priced at £9.95, it's 100 per cent compatible with both Interface 1 and Microdrives.

This month's calls to TP have brought all sorts of questions and queries. First, let's turn to John Samuels of Cheshire. John wanted to know how far he could extend his Speccy's memory and where, for that matter, could he buy upgrades. Well — the Z80 processor can only actually address 64K directly, so if you take out 16K of that for the ROM that's already there, you're left with 48K RAM space — precisely the amount available in the 48K model.

But, I hear you cry, what about these 80K upgrades from East London Robotics we've all heard about? The simple answer is that those sort of upgrades don't address the whole 80K at one and the same time — they use banks of memory which can be switched in when needed. Personally, I don't see the reason behind the average person buying an 80K upgrade, unless you happen to write a lot of mega-long programs yourself. The only commercially available programs to use the full potential of the extra memory are those manufactured by the companies that produce the upgrades; and anyhow, it certainly won't make the computer any more powerful when running *Jet Set Willy*, for example.

Hot on the heels of the 75th call concerning the QL and all its versions (including FB, AH, JM, etc) Dave Thompson from Cardiff got on the line to ask if Spectrum software will run on the QL, and also whether the two networks are compatible. They're good questions. Joe the Lion of Liverpool claimed some time back that it had nearly finished a Speccy

FROM THE HIP



Troubleshootin' Pete Reporting...

emulator and cassette interface that would allow you to run programs directly. Unfortunately, all attempted calls since then have been met only with the unobtainable tone; rumour has it the company's vanished down the Mersey Tunnel (perhaps they would like to contact us, if that's not the case).

You can, however, type in most Speccy programs and they should work after a little bit of straightforward conversion. But that's only Basic programs, of course, machine code is totally different. Networks between the machines are supposed to work too; the manuals and the adverts have always said they are compatible. But as yet, our own Simon Goodwin is the only person I know who's had any success with the Net, and that's only in one direction: from Speccy to QL, via an odd use of the COPY command

which will be explained by Simon in a future issue — just as soon as he's worked out exactly what he did. Hopefully, this is another 'temporary fault' — to be corrected when Sinclair Research has finally come to some agreement with itself over which ROM it's going to use in the QL. For the present time, however, let's just call relationships between the two 'strained'.

Howard Robbins from Dorset reports having a pretty minor, but nevertheless annoying, problem with his 12-year-old son who's becoming very picky with dad's programs. When the screen prompts 'press any key to continue...', his son complains that when he presses the Shift keys the program won't continue — so you can't press *any* key at all. Short of changing the prompt to read 'press any key except the Shift keys to continue...', Howard has been stuck. Well Howard, here's the salvation you've been awaiting; lifted from Dilwyn Jones' book *Delving Deeper into your ZX Spectrum* (published by Interface Publications), this short routine should keep your son satisfied:

```
1000 PRINT "Press any key to
continue..."
1010 IF INKEYS="" AND IN
65278=255 AND IN 32766=255
THEN GOTO 1010
```

Of course, an even easier solution is wop him one round the ear and tell him to stop being so bl**din' pedantic.

Troubleshootin' Pete

Pete's phone lines are open from 10am-1pm and 2-5pm, on Wednesdays and Fridays. Ring him on 01-631 1433.

SPECCY STARS IN 'B' MOVIES

Company 'B', a London-based video company, has just completed a video presentation for Ebury Software. To get the perfect picture necessary for video recording, the company's Clive Gill spent some time looking into the Spectrum's video capabilities. The Ebury effort is the result of all this hard work — a picture which is better than you would expect to get from the Speccy at home on your colour telly.

Company 'B's' connection with the Speccy doesn't stop there, however, because the outfit's been using a Spectrum for some time anyway — long before being

approached by Ebury. It's got an electronic clapperboard and an electronic countdown à la Speccy, both of which have been in action for a while now. And the fun doesn't stop there because as soon as an RS232 lead arrives the Spectrum will also be controlling the video rostrum.

Company 'B' is now considering advertising its new-found talent for producing Spectrum videos. If you're interested, contact Clive at Company 'B' on 01-437 9693 and he'll give you instructions on how to find them deep in the murky depths of Soho's Wardour Street.

ROM SOFTWARE AT LAST!

Parker, which some time ago announced plans for ROM software for the Speccy and Interface 2, has finally come up with some product. In fact, Parker is the first inde-



pendent software house to produce software for this format, and Sinclair Research has given the company plenty of support.

The games themselves (announced in *Frontlines*, issue 4) are of a

very high quality; indeed, all offerings include superb graphics and sound. However, one stands out above the others ... *Gyruss*. It's a space arcade/action game that has its players piloting their spaceship through the solar system from Neptune towards Earth.

The promotion that's planned is impressive. A machine called a Comparator will contain copies of all the games — by simple selection of a number, potential buyers will be able to play whatever they like right there and then.

The games themselves will become generally available by October — at a price still to be decided but which is rumoured to be around the £19.95 mark.

SPIELS ON WHEELS

As part of WH Smiths' drive to train its sales teams in all aspects of computing, the company's now acquired two mobile classrooms which will

tour the country. This project is the brainchild of Retail Staff Manager, Ken Newman; it occurred to him once that he realised it wasn't

TOP TEN TURKEYS

Hey it's Turkey time! And — surprise, surprise, it's *Jet Set Willy* in the pole position. Well, don't blame us, you voted for it! Votes for next month should be mailed post-haste (if not sooner); just use the coupon on the Top 20 page.



This Month	Last Month	Months In Chart	Title	Company
1	-	1	Jet Set Willy	Software Projects
2	1	2	Transylvanian Tower	Richard Shepard Software
3	-	1	Ah Diddums	Imagine Software
4	-	1	Hungry Horace	Melbourne House
5	-	1	Horace and the Spiders	Melbourne House
6	7	2	Mad Martha II	Mikro Gen
7	-	1	Planetoids	Psion
8	4	2	Yomp	Virgin Games
9	-	1	Hunchback	Ocean Software
10	-	1	Pedro	Imagine Software

PHOENIX DOUBLES UP

Phoenix Software has just launched a range of games for £6.99 that the company describes as a 'steal'. Pinch 'em if you must, but basically each cassette contains two games — one arcade and one adventure; complete the arcade version, then flip over for the other.

Part one, *Joker's Wild*, has you stopping enemy aliens from capturing the souls of the human race with hypnotic cards. The *Dragon* adventure has you eliminating a corrupt Emperor — and clues and running code are locked inside a tiny sealed envelope marked 'Panic Packet — Only Open In Dire



A scene from the *Dragon* adventure game — for those in trouble, there's a 'cheat-sheet' provided.

Emergency'.

Both games will slot on to either a 16K or 48K Spectrum, and

you'll find them at Boots and all good (not to mention, bad) computer stores.

Trashman



New Generation products are sold according to their terms of trade and conditions of sale.

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Not only will you be gripped by the action you'll be amazed and amused by the high quality graphics.

With seven levels of play featuring three attempts to finish the game (assuming you are not run over by a car) Trashman will provide even the most experienced games player with a thrilling challenge. 1 or 2 player option, Hall of Fame and joystick compatibility* ensure this game has all the best arcade features.

Trashman is available **NOW** for the 48K Spectrum. Ask for it today at your local computer store!

Only £5.95

*Kempston, Sinclair Interface 2, Protek or equivalent.

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PHEW — WHAT A SCORCHER!

Some time back, Melbourne House published *Super Charge Your Spectrum* — in effect, a heady selection of ready-to-run machine code routines (multi-directional scrolls, useful sound effects, program re-numbering utilities and so on). Now from the same stable (and author) comes *Advanced Spectrum Machine Language*, a book containing far higher grade routines that cover areas of the 48K Spectrum that have never before been explored.

Right from the word go, author David Webb boasts things like animated loading screens, all you never

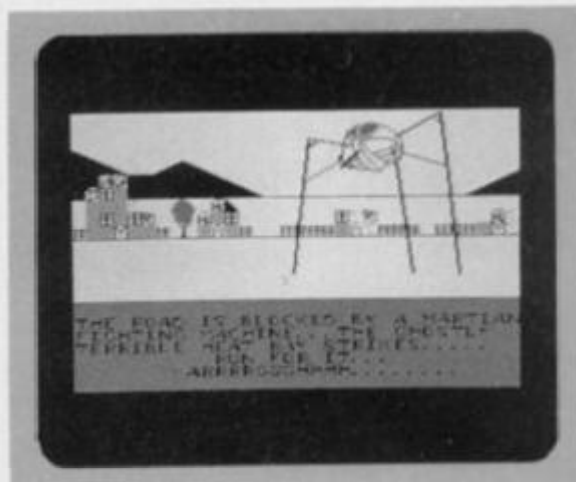
knew about interrupts, the lowdown on pixel animation techniques, an interrupt-driven print processor with full screen horizon generator, and true Hi-res colour; all in all, pretty impressive for a mere book. And what's more, most of it is actually as good as it sounds; the only exception for me was that animated loading screens turned out to be the *Manic Miner* kind — as opposed to real animated characters that move across the screen while a program loads.

Several chapters of the book turn attention to the design and development of a sprite routine which is

absolutely flicker-free. In fact, though this is probably the only part of the book to fall below the standard of the best arcade games; all the same, you still end up with a sprite routine worth having.

At times, David Webb tends to babble on a bit, but he always gets there in the end. Overall, *Advanced Spectrum Machine Language* is clear and well thought out, and it's also excellent reading for the most experienced of programmers. It's probably the best Speccy book of the year so far and, without doubt, receives the YS seal of approval.

Tony Samuels



When H G Wells wrote *War of the Worlds* somewhere back in the dark ages of 1898, you can bet he never expected it to end like this. Certainly, few such internationally famous books can claim to have made the transition from book to radio, then to film, TV, record and, finally, home computer. CRL has created a video game in conjunction with Jeff Wayne (whose best-selling *War of the Worlds* album was released in 1978); the software incorporates his music. The game is available for the 48K Spectrum at £7.95 from usual stockists, and CRL is planning versions for the CBM 64, Oric Atmos, BBC Micro, Electron and MSX machines to appear in the near future.

DK'S NEW FACE

Dk'Tronics new programmable joystick interface enables any software from any supplier to be used with joystick control. It can be programmed quickly and simply from the keyboard, or with the machine code software



supplied. Both joystick and keyboard can be used simultaneously and, in most cases, the joystick can even be programmed while the software is running. The port will accept any Atari-type joystick, and the interface is compatible with Interface 1 and Microdrives.

Incorporated in the design is a through connector that lets you bolt goodies like printers and so on into the back. The price is £22.95 and it should be in the shops now.

DOWN THE GARDEN PATH

Calling all Speccy owners who enjoy a spot of gardening. Here for your edification is the first ever computerised plant database, called (unoriginally) *Green Fingers*. With it you can easily dig out the data on

the ideal plants to add bloom to your gardening requirements.

You can stalk around the package for up to five of 17 characteristics simultaneously — such variables as height, hardness, sun, water and

soil needs, pruning, month of flowering, colour and so on — as you rake around for the ideal plant. You can also weed out of the database, comprehensive details on over 350 flowers, shrubs and

trees; Latin names, or even nick-names can be used in the search.

The cassette implants into 48K Spectrums and costs £8.95 mail order from Practical Software, 40 Worple Road, London SW19.

SINCLAIRWATCH

Hotfoot after publicity, Sir Clive Sinclair continues to try wooing the more unfriendly (honest?) of the micro mags — giving his own mini-impression of Walter Mondale on the Presidential trail. And who can say it isn't working? One worthy publication has already managed to print a full colour picture of Clive on the front cover — heralding an interview that answers such weighty questions as why you can't buy posters of the great man in high street shops. And I thought there was an *Obscene Publications Act*! Actually, it's rumoured that homes up and down the country are now displaying his holy image on walls and doors — only thing is, for some reason many of the pictures are covered with tiny holes.

Actually, apart from defacing pictures, there are, of course, other ways of venting annoyance. Rumour reaches us that some dissatisfied customers have taken to

sending a brick in brown paper to Freepost, Camberley. Wonder if they'll get enough to build an extension?

Hands up all those who saw Sir Clive receiving the ultimate accolade of satirisation on the wickedly funny *Spitting Image* TV programme. The gist of it seemed to revolve around a product that takes 28 days to come — I can't imagine what it was all about.

Many were surprised to hear of Imagine's recent demise, following acute financial problems. One of the largest Spectrum software houses, it was always thought to be very successful, despite the constant rumour of non-payment of bills. The company certainly knew how to write and market good games — and also how to be extravagant. Declared assets are rumoured to include a BMW, Porsche and XR3, presumably acquired to help give the programmers an ego trip. Ex-director, Colin Stokes, is now probably very glad he

got sacked earlier this year — following the phone tapping episode; he's currently working for *Jet Set Willy* company, Software Projects.

Doesn't Sinclair Research realise the only way it's likely to get Microdrive acceptance from a still suspicious public is by making the blank cartridges far more widely available. But, I hear you say, they're already widely available in the shops — at £4.95! For many potential punters I believe the price still remains an insurmountable stumbling block. Of course, Sinclair Research would reply that no way could they match normal audio cassette prices and still keep the beasts profitable — after all, we're talking about different orders of manufacture quality. But the fact is, Sinclair Research may just have to bite the bullet to a greater cause. It could be the only way the company will ever fully succeed with its controversial system of storage. By Guttersnipe.

BETA BASIC 1.8

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NOTE: Release 1.0 is still available for 16/48K Spectrum at £11.00.

ALTER screen colours
(general or specific)
AUTO line numbering
BREAK out of code loops
CLOCK digital clock
CURSOR CONTROL CODES allow
entries to have complex shapes
DEF KEY user definable keys
DELETE a block of lines
DO-LOOP structures
DPOKE double poke
EDIT specified line
ELSE used with IF...THEN
EXIT leave DO-LOOP

FILL enclosed area with specified ink
or colour
GET wait for keypress
JOIN two program lines
KEYIN a string
KEYWORDS new keywords and off
LISTALIST line TO line
USED used with GOTO, GOSUB
ON ERROR trap errors
(with LINE, STAT and ERROR)
PLOT a string (may contain cursor
control codes)
POKE a string
POP Basic's stack
PROC, DEF PROC, END PROC
(for named procedures)

RENUM versatile renumber
ROLL all or part of screen in any
direction by specified number of
pixels, with or without attributes
SCROLL like ROLL, but without wrap-
around
SORT arrays (very fast)
SPLIT program lines
TRACE program execution
UNITS used with DO or LOOP
USING used with PRINT
WHILE used with DO or LOOP
XOS, YOS move PLOT angle
XSG, YSG change PLOT scale

AND (bit-by-bit)
BNE decimal to binary
CHARA number to 2 characters
CODE text code
DEC hexadecimal to decimal
DPOKE double poke
FILL fill area

FUNCTIONS

HEX2 decimal to hexadecimal
INSTR string search
MEM free memory
MEMORY8 all of memory as a string
MOD modulus
NUMBER 2 characters to number
OR (bit-by-bit)

RND random fast RND
SCREEN microdrive user graphics
SINE fast sine
STRINGS repeats strings
TIME current time
USING formats numbers
XOR (bit-by-bit)

Only £11.00 inclusive! (Upgrade price for Release 1.0 owners is £4.00. This includes a 12-page supplement to your manual. Please quote date of purchase. If you did not purchase from us, state supplier and return original cassette.)

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2 Q Mark

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3 "Q Back"

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4 "Q Prune"

Will delete any file with a single key-press, so *be careful* with this one!

Instructions

On Paper and in a QUILL file (for when you lose the paper!). *All four programs* will work with the extra microdrives if you get them, and have been successful with cartridges holding over 60 files each.

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A new game aimed at unemployed, aspiring socialites is currently being worked on by that ever prolific ideas machine — Melbourne House. The aim will be to rise from the ranks of 'working class philistine' right up to the dizzy heights of sheer affluence, acquiring on the way the required boorish behaviour and other necessary trappings.

Entitled *Hampstead*, the game will begin with our unhappy specimen of Homo sapiens living in a grotty little flat on the wrong side of town. On the dole and with very little money, our working class hero starts to hanker after the good life; he's had enough of poverty. But how can he manage the transition from these humble beginnings to become a wealthy and successful resident of London's desirable garden suburb?

Well, a quick look at the various alternatives will soon rule out such a sordid course of action as actually getting a job. Instead, the correct move is to become — yes, you've guessed it — a 'poser'. This involves finding the right girl, buying the right sort of pet, talking the right kind of esoteric nonsense and generally doing anything else that might help him to become one of 'them'.

OK, YAH!

Unfortunately, being a slob, our social climber doesn't have a clue how to go about it. So it's going to be up to you — the player — to help and advise our unsophisticated, unrefined yobbo on the finer points of succeeding in his desire to live in Hampstead. If MH's programmers keep to their production schedules, you should get the opportunity to do just that sometime in October, for a mere £8.95.

Still proving elusive, however, is Melbourne's long awaited *Sherlock Holmes* adventure. Says publicity manager, Paula Byrne, "the official launch date is now the 11th of September, and copies should be in the shops soon

RUMBLES

Software sleuth, Ron Smith, wrestles with the rumours from around the houses.

afterwards". Elementary, my dear Paula.

PLAY IT AGAIN

A lot less 'bovver' than writing completely new programs is to convert existing ones to run on different machines — which is precisely what Salamander Software (or more precisely, Jeff Minter and Co) is doing at the moment.

Towards the end of last summer, Llamasoft released one of Minter's funniest arcade games for the CBM 64. Called *Hover Bovver*, the player starts off by 'pinching' his neighbour's Air-Mo so that he can cut the lawn (16 lawns actually). However, Jim (who owns the mower) isn't too happy about all this. In fact, so angry is he, that he decides to give chase around the hedges and flower beds. You retaliate by setting your dog, Rover, on to him.

At this point, things really start to get out of hand. In your hurry to escape the wrath of Jim, you accidentally mow down a few flower beds — which upsets the gardener enough for him to join the posse. And finally, as if all that weren't enough, Rover gets a bit bolshy about the noise and starts biting at the mower; the stupid animal receives a short-back-and-sides, runs off yelping and meanwhile, the Air-Mo overheats. Phew!

Anyway, friend Minter is well into the conversion (claims Salamander's Chris Holland) and the finished program should be available for the Spectrum in good time for Christmas. There's no information on price as yet.

WHO DONE IT?

Bringing us firmly back to earth in the role of a private detective, *The Dan Diamond Trilogy* is the latest project of Salamander Software. It's a collection of three text-only adventures based on Raymond Chandler's famous character, Sam Spade. As you progress through the game you'll uncover clues (along with a few red herrings) that should solve the case.

But what case? Says Peter Ohlson, "It's quite likely that you won't find out until the last adventure." — by which time, presumably, you'll have been shot at, stabbed, or at the very least beaten senseless for no apparent reason. To add to the atmosphere, appropriate sound effects have been included for when a gun is fired or when Sam

runs out of oxygen (?). The whole trilogy comes complete for £14.95, and should be on the shelves by late August or early September. Help sheets will be available on request, for those who get stuck.

SPACE COWBOYS

If you've ever pictured yourself as a sort of helpful, cosmic Hell's Angel, then Softek's upcoming offering might be just what you're looking for. It's claimed that it'll be an inter-planetary adventure where the player travels around on a motorbike without wheels. Well, who needs wheels in space?

Known as *Starbike*, the object will be to zoom over to a planet and pick up all the aliens (it's not clear yet whether they're to be rescued or 'alien-napped') and take them back to your space ship. But beware! If you return without having collected every last one of them, you'll be punished by losing one or more of your lives.

"*Starbike* will be available around the end of August," claims Softek's Martin Davis, "and will include not only adventure, but also strategy and shoot-em-up action as well." The price hasn't been finally nailed down, but it's expected to be in the usual £5.95-£6.95 range.

IT'S IN THE STARS

Strategy (and tactics) will both be included in a game which it's said will be the best of its kind when it's launched in October — according to a CP Software spokesman.

Called *Superchess 3.5*, "... it beats CDS's *Colossus 2.0* with no trouble at all. In fact, it wipes

it out", claimed the man from CP. He also said that when *Superchess* played six games against *Colossus*, it won four and drew two. With *Colossus* being generally considered the current 'champion', a result like that just can't be ignored.

Another program being written by CP Software will be of particular interest to those concerned with astronomy, or perhaps even astrology, because it allows the user to look at the planets of our solar system in their correct positions at any given time. Just enter the date, and so on, and away you go. Watch this space for details

A SPORTING CHANCE

Olympic fever is currently afflicting both the management and staff of Manchester-based Ocean Software, as they work on something called *Daly Thompson's Decathlon*.

Featuring all 10 events (comprising the 100-, 400- and 1500-metre races, 110-metre high hurdles, javelin, discus, putting the shot, pole vault, high jump and long jump), this looks like being a winner from sheer novelty value alone. But Ocean's not just relying on that. Explains their Mr Finnigan, "we have three programmers working on the graphics, and one on the sound." Great... but why is it being called *Daly Thompson's Decathlon*? "Because a little black man is competing", says Finnigan. And also, presumably, because Thompson just happens to be the best in his field (ouch!).

There's no release date at the moment but it'll retail for £6.90, and be either keyboard or joystick compatible, with a two player option. **VS**



As a result of signing a deal with the BBC, CRL is now working on a computer adaptation of the very popular *Magic Roundabout* animation, to be in the shops by around the end of August.

Says Andrew Stoddard, the game's author, "The game will be either keyboard or joystick compatible."

The Sinclair

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and you



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THE YS TOP 20

Welcome back to the chart that you know isn't fixed. As usual, not only do we have your top twenty fave-raves, we have your top-ten turkeys too (speaking alliteratively).

First polling slip out of the bag for this month came from Stephen Perry of Hemel Hempstead. Our usual prize of three new packages is on its way.

Don't forget, you can send in your vote every month, just fill in the form (or take a photocopy if you don't want to mutilate your magazine). By the way, you'll notice there's now room on the voting slip for you to put a personal comment next to each of your five top 20 votes. We'll be using the best of these (with name-checks) in our next chart.

Post all entries to YS Charts, Your Spectrum, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.

YS TOP 20 READER POLL

My top five raves on the Speccy are:

1 _____

Comments _____

2 _____

Comments _____

3 _____

Comments _____

4 _____

Comments _____

5 _____

Comments _____

My three top turkeys for the Speccy are:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

I understand that when this chart was tested — eight out of ten owners said their Spectrums preferred it. (What? Ed.)

**YS TOP TWENTY
YOUR SPECTRUM
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**YOUR
SPECTRUM**

YS TOP TWENTY CHART

THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	MONTHS IN CHART	GAME	DESCRIPTION	IMAGE
1	3	3	LUNAR JETMAN ULTIMATE	A COMPLEX ARCADE/ADVENTURE THAT TAKES PLACE ON THE MOON	
2	1	4	JET SET WILLY SOFTWARE PROJECTS	SEQUEL TO MANIC MINER. GO WITH WILLY TO 60 MORE EXCITING LOCATIONS.	
3	NEW	1	SABRE WULF ULTIMATE	A MAZE GAME WHERE YOU SEARCH FOR THE FOUR PARTS OF AN AMULET TO COMPLETE YOUR TASK.	
4	2	5	MANIC MINER SOFTWARE PROJECTS	JOIN MINER WILLY IN HIS QUEST FOR THE MISSING KEYS	
5	NEW	1	MUGSY MELBOURNE HOUSE	AN UPDATED GRAPHICAL VERSION OF KINGDOMS SET IN THE 1920'S.	
6	7	3	TRASHMAN NEW GENERATION SOFTWARE	TRY AND EMPTY THE DUSTBINS IN THE FASTEST POSSIBLE TIME, AVOIDING SNAPPING DOGS AND KILLER BICYCLES.	
7	NEW	1	WORLD CUP ARTIC	LIFELIKE SIMULATION OF A FOOTBALL GAME ADDS TO THIS RECREATION OF THE WORLD CUP MATCHES.	
8	10	5	FIGHTER PILOT DIGITAL INTEGRATION	A 3D FLIGHT SIMULATION PUTS YOU BEHIND THE CONTROLS OF A FIGHTER PLANE.	
9	4	4	SCUBA DRIVE DURELL SOFTWARE	PUT ON YOUR WETSUIT AND PLUNGE INTO THE ICY DEPTHS IN SEARCH OF TREASURE.	
10	9	5	ATIC ATAC ULTIMATE	A FULL GRAPHICAL ADVENTURE IN AN ARCADE GAME FORMAT	
11	16	3	FRED QUICKSILVA	YOU TAKE THE ROLE OF AN ARCHAEOLOGIST LOOKING FOR TREASURE IN AN OLD MAZE-MINE.	
12	NEW	4	HUNCHBACK OCEAN	A FAST MOVING ARCADE GAME WHERE YOU JUMP THE WALLS TO SAVE ESMERELDA.	
13	11	5	DEATHCHASE MICROMEGA	'RETURN OF THE JEDI' LIVES! A SOFTWARE RECREATION OF THE EPIC 'ON YER BIKE' CHASE SCENE.	
14	6	5	ANT ATTACK QUICKSILVA	AN AMAZING 3D ADVENTURE IN THE CITY OF ANTESCHER.	
15	8	5	CHEQUERED FLAG PSION	JOIN THE GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT AND RACE ON SOME OF THE GREATEST TRACKS IN THE WORLD	
16	5	5	JET PAC ULTIMATE	BUILD A SPACESHIP, THEN TREK THE GALAXY FOR RARE GEMS AND TREASURES.	
17	NEW	3	THE HOBBIT MELBOURNE HOUSE	AN ADVENTURE BASED ON THE BOOK OF THE SAME NAME.	
18	15	4	CHUCKIE EGG A&F SOFTWARE	FARMER GILES HAS TO ROUND UP ALL THE EGGS BEFORE THE NASTIES GET OUT AND EAT UP ALL THE CORN.	
19	NEW	1	LORDS OF MIDNIGHT BEYOND SOFTWARE	A MULTI-SCREEN GRAPHICAL ARCADE GAME WHICH IS NEXT IN THE HOBBIT/VALHALLA FAMILY TREE.	
20	13	3	WHEELIE MICROSPHERE	A LIFE-OR-DEATH RACE AGAINST DOUBLE-DECKER BUSES AND MANIC HEDGEHOGS.	

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Y59



If you're the proud owner of a "clapped-out MX80", try the converted code from Mad Milmps of Durham to get Andy Pennell's Dumps of Distinction working.

WHAT THE LORD GIVETH...

I'm writing to give warm and emphatic support to the letter entitled 'Microdriving' — written by John Ashplant — which appeared on issue 5 of YS.

I too have spent a fortune on software. I too have no intention of making money by copying and selling pirated software; and I too wish to get the best advantage of my own paid-for possessions. I enjoy the facility of being able to run programs from my Microdrive, with all that this offers in the

way of speed and compactness, and therefore I feel that the obstacles placed in my way are both frustrating and unacceptable — especially when one considers how easy it is to transfer from tape to tape using two tape recorders.

Any advice, procedures, software or hardware which will enable non-technical and law abiding users to transfer taped programs to Microdrives are, in my view anyway, much to be encouraged (like Tasman and Campbell). Otherwise one starts to wonder about the purpose of having a Microdrive in the first place.

Ian Ross, Renfrewshire

At least one company (Romantic Robot) are selling software which will allow users to copy commercial programs to Microdrive; it'll be interesting to note whether this will cause any programmers to hit the piracy bandwagon. I suspect the reason there is so little software currently on Microdrive is the cost of the cartridges and their duplication — until Sinclair Research reduce the price of the cartridges, Microdrive owners are likely to find themselves discriminated against. I've said it before and I'll say it again.... life isn't a line of cherries. E.d.

THOSE FLICKERING VALUES

Regarding the letter from Mike Minchin in the June issue which restates the well-known problem of the 'flickering' of the values returned from the keyboard input ports, here's one solution your readers may like to consider.

To divide a *binary* number by 32 we would move the point five places to the left — so the returned eight-bit binary number from the input port would then, in fact, consist of the three high bits (including the 'naughty' bit 6) as the integer and the five low values as the fraction. We can then subtract the integer. Multiply by 32 and we've a whole number again which, as it doesn't contain bit 6, doesn't flicker. The unpressed value is, of course, 31 (16+8+4+2+1) but we can then simply add 224 to give the original unpressed value of 255.

The following short program will, I think, prove the theory:

```

5 REM PRESS KEYS
  QWERT
10 DEF FN I(X)=(X/32-
  INT (X/32))*32
20 LET a=FN (IN
  64510)+224
30 PRINT AT 0,0; a
40 GO TO 20

```

I hope the above ramblings may be of some interest and use to someone. May I take this chance to thank you for publishing the best magazine on the market.

Derek Hirst, Barnsley

You certainly may.... and we thank you for your suggestions.
Ed.

JET SET LOONY

Seeing your article in issue 4 about *Jet Set Willy* I felt compelled to write to you

about some locations you've missed out. The Gaping Pit seemed the most obvious one, though even I haven't visited it. Secondly, and more importantly, you omitted *three* major locations; here's how you get to them.

Wait on the bow till 11.45pm (Smith time), which may seem an awful long time to you swashbuckling Spectrums. At that moment, a raft will get tossed up on a large wave and you must then jump on. It takes you to Crusoe Corner (a desert island to us landlubbers). Then you shin up a palm tree to arrive at Tree Tops — The Sequel, from which you catch the bird that travels up towards In The Clouds. From there you can control yourself all over the house (funny things happen when you try to enter the water or the Master Bedroom) and from that point, it should be possible to find The Gaping Pit (though I've not tried it myself). It also clobbers the 'Attic Attack' and makes it possible to go through baddies (fire puts you down where you are, so be careful) whereupon the bird disintegrates.

Robin Daines, Chester

Hey, he's right... but if you wait In The Clouds long enough you actually get attacked by a ball of fire coming in from the left that first frazzles Willy, then dumps him inside an ice volcano under Hades, and then — and then — and then — OK, clear off schmuck! Ed

DISAPPOINTED DUMPER

In *Dumps of Distinction* on page 55 of YS, issue 4, you give listings for the Hilderbay, Kempston and Kempston E interfaces. The trouble is I don't have these; could you please tell me what mods have to be done to get the listing to run with my Sinclair ZX Interface 1? By the way, this is the first time I have bought your mag and I like it. Keep up the good work.

NJ Ball, Sidcup

To get Dumps of Distinction working via Interface 1, add the following lines to the listing.

1000 DATA 207, 49, 24, 16, -1
1300 DATA 197, 229, 207, 30, 255,
193, 201, -1

For some reason my particular printer kept crashing in the middle of the dump. So, if you have a similar problem, I can only suggest you try a lower Baud rate. Andy Pennell. ¶

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SMOOTH MOVES

Does your Speccy output sometimes look like it's suffering from a bad case of the shakes? Relax... let things slide with Simon Goodwin's cure for jerky graphics!

Presented here is a short machine code routine that lets you move graphics smoothly around the screen, without suffering the restrictions of the Spectrum character grid. Graphics and ASCII characters can be positioned at any high resolution co-ordinate with a simple Basic command. You're not restricted to the 704 'PRINT positions' — rows zero to 21 and columns zero to 31 — you can place characters at any point on the 256 by 176 Hi-res grid.

The program uses only 120 bytes of memory and is completely re-locatable, which means that you can load it anywhere in memory. It works without problems on a 16K computer. Another advantage over the usual PRINT AT command is that this one allows you to use an extra ninety-odd user-defined graphics. In addition to the usual 21 user-defined graphics (character codes 144-164), you can define and position characters 165 to 255 with the YS Smooth Move routine.

INTO LOAD MODE

The Basic listing loads the machine code into any area of memory. Type in the listing, taking care over the DATA statements, and then decide where you wish to store the code. On a 48K Spectrum you might want to put the code at address 64500. Type CLEAR 64499 to tell Basic that it must not use addresses above 64499, and then RUN the program. You'll be asked for a 'Load address' — enter 64500. The program reads the DATA and stores it from memory address 64500 onwards.

If you've made a typing error in the DATA, an appropriate message will appear. Correct the error and RUN again. Don't test the routine until the 'Position character...' message appears; the code is then ready for use. It's a good idea to SAVE everything, just in case an error has slipped past the 'check' in the loader.

On a 16K Spectrum (assuming you have no other machine code in memory) you might put the code at address 31670. Type CLEAR 31669 and then specify a 'Load address' of 31670. Of course, you can load the code anywhere you like, although it's best to protect it with the CLEAR command, or it could be overwritten by Basic.

The routine provides a Hi-res version of the command:

PRINT INK 8; PAPER 8; OVER 1; AT y;x;CHRS c

The syntax is rather different:

RANDOMIZE x AND y=c+USR a

Where 'x' and 'y' are the horizontal and vertical co-ordinates of the top left corner of the character, 'c' is the ASCII code of the character and 'a' is the address where you stored the routine. So:

RANDOMIZE 0 AND 175=65+USR 64500

will position a letter 'A' (character 65) at the top left corner of the screen — assuming you stored the machine code at address 64500. The RANDOMIZE is a 'dummy' to hold the result of the USR call. If your program uses random numbers you should replace RANDOMIZE with a dummy variable assignment, such as:

LET dummy=0 AND 175=65+USR 64500

You're allowed to specify coordinates or character codes with expressions as well as variables or numbers. For instance:

**RANDOMIZE xpos+xdir AND ypos-ydir = CODE
***+USR move**

is allowed. Our routine uses a neat technique to fetch the three previous expressions on the line, before the USR call. If there are more or less than three values, a 'Parameter' error will be reported. Make sure that you've used the correct separators — AND, equals and plus — between the co-ordinates, the character code and the USR call. If you're using calculations more compli-

cated than addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, you may need to put each co-ordinate or character code in brackets — so that the routine can distinguish them.

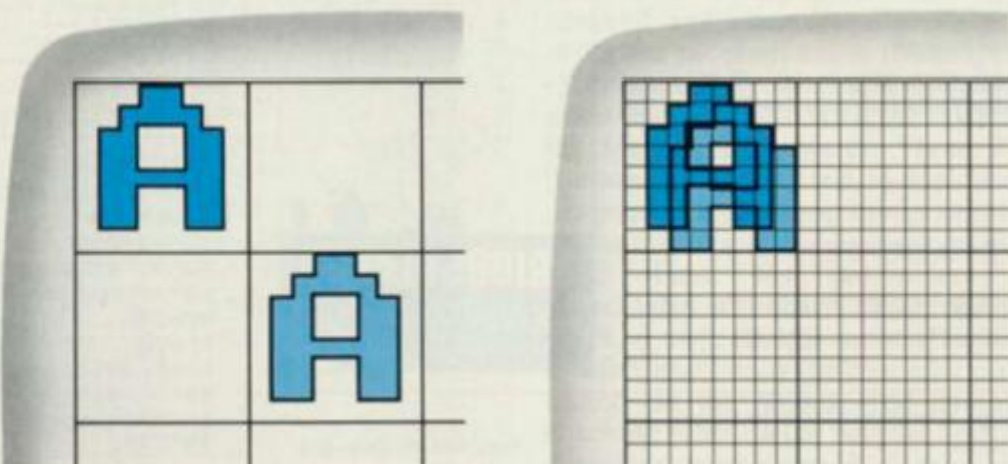
The machine code contains extensive error-trapping. It won't let you use y co-ordinates less than seven, since each character is eight lines high. A character at co-ordinate 0,6 would have its bottom line at y co-ordinate minus one! The 'Integer out of range' error message appears if you use vertical co-ordinates less than seven or greater than 175. Xco-ordinates beyond 248 simply 'wrap around' to the opposite side of the screen; decimal values are rounded to the nearest whole number.

A SMOOTH OPERATOR

The second Basic program shows the features of the routine quite clearly. A ball bounces around the screen at a variety of speeds. It's positioned using 'LET d=' rather than 'RANDOMIZE' so that the random number sequence is not constantly re-started whenever the ball moves. The listing is fairly straightforward, but make sure you type commas (not semicolons) in line 330.

The machine code always uses the OVER 1 setting, so that any character can be erased without destroying the background, simply by re-drawing it in the same place. The characters take on the colour of the INK where they are plotted. This avoids the need for compli-

PIXEL MOVEMENT



Using Smooth Move, you have the full 176 by 256 pixel grid within which to print your UDGs, 'special' UDG or the normal character set. The left-hand diagram shows character movement in one block jump; the illustration on the right shows how the character would make the same jump smoothly pixel by pixel in eight movements.

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SMOOTH MOVES

cated code to save and restore colours, and prevents weird effects as objects pass one another.

The Spectrum normally uses character codes 165 to 255 to represent keywords — words like THEN, PRINT and so on. There's never any need to zoom those around the screen, so our machine code program lets you define an extra 91 user-defined graphics in their place. Together with the 21 standard user-defined graphics, this gives you 122 characters to play with.

LABELS	ADDRESS	COMMENT
SYSTEM POINTERS		
UDGS	5C7B	User graphics pointer
CHARS	5C36	Character set pointer
BLKCH	5C92	Block graphic buffer
STACK	5C65	Maths stack end pointer
STBOT	5C63	Maths stack start pointer
ROM ROUTINES		
MAKEB	0B38	Make graphic in B
PIXEL	22AA	Find address of pixel
POP_A	2DA2	Pop A from maths stack

The table above shows the system pointers and ROM routines used in *Smooth Move*, giving their labels and addresses. This is for the assembler's use only, and need not be typed in.

The assembler code for *Smooth Move* — just so that you can see the interesting machine code tricks that Simon's used.

```

FDEB      1320      ORG 65000
           1330 ;    "Fetch end of stack"
FDEB 2A655C  1340 MOVER LD HL, (STACK)
FDEB E5      1350 PUSH HL
           1360 ;    "3 numbers on stack?"
FDEC EB      1370 EX DE, HL
FDED 2A635C  1380 LD HL, (STBOT)
FDF0 010F00  1390 LD BC, 15
FDF3 09      1400 ADD HL, BC
FDF4 ED52    1410 SBC HL, DE
FDF6 2802    1420 JR Z, FCODE
           1430 ;    "3 parameters needed!"
FDF8 CF      1440 RST B
FDF9 19      1450 DEFB 25
           1460 ;    "Find the char. code"
FDFA CDA22D  1470 FCODE CALL POP_A
           1480 ;    "Divide into 3 groups:"
           1490 ;    " 0-127 ASCII chars"
           1500 ;    "128-143 block graphics"
           1510 ;    "144-255 user defined"
FDFD FE80    1520 CP 128
FDFD 380B    1530 JR C, ASCII
FE01 47      1540 LD B, A
FE02 D690    1550 SUB 144
FE04 3813    1560 JR C, BLOCK
           1570 ;    "Must be a UDG"
FE06 ED5B7B5C 1580 LD DE, (UDGS)
FE0A 1804    1590 JR INDEX
           1600 ;
FE0C ED5B365C 1610 ASCII LD DE, (CHARS)
           1620 ;    "Find character form"

```

In principle the new characters are defined in exactly the same way as the old ones. They follow the others in memory, which means that you will have to expand the user-defined graphics area before you can define more than the standard 21 characters. On a 48K computer you'd use the following commands to expand the graphics area to cope with 122 characters:

```
CLEAR 64559 : POKE 23675,48 : POKE 23676,252
```

The POKES adjust the system variable CHARS so that it points an extra 728 (91 * 8) bytes further down memory. They don't reserve memory for any machine code, so you'd probably use CLEAR 64499 and load the *Smooth Move* code at 64500 (or thereabouts).

On a 16K computer load the machine code at 31670 and reserve space with:

```
CLEAR 31669 : POKE 23675,48 : POKE 23676,124
```

When you come to program the user-defined graphics, you POKE the patterns into memory as usual. The only difference is that you can't use the USR "letter" function to locate characters after USR "u". The extra characters still follow at eight-byte intervals. User-defined graphic 'a' has character code 144, so you can find the definition of the character with code 'N' by typing:

```
PRINT USR "a" + 8 * (N-144)
```

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Smooth Move uses some interesting machine code tricks, so I've listed the assembler code of the program as well as the Basic loader. This is the longest listing, assembled using version 2.1 of Picturesque's excellent EDITAS assembler.

```

100 REM SMOOTH MOVE DEMO
110 REM By Simon N Goodwin
120 REM
130 REM Load code
140 CLEAR 30999
150 LOAD "Mover" CODE 31000
160 REM Set area
170 LET xmax=247
180 LET ymax=168
190 REM Set up positions
200 LET xpos=INT (RND*200)
210 LET ypos=175
220 LET xdir=INT (RND*6+1)
230 LET ydir=-INT (RND*5+1)
240 REM Define ball
250 RESTORE
260 FOR i=USR "a" TO USR "e"
270 READ d
280 POKE i,d
290 NEXT i
300 LET shape=144
310 INK 6: PAPER 2: BORDER 5
320 FOR i=0 TO 21
330 PRINT AT i,0, INVERSE 1,
350 NEXT i
360 GO TO 480
390 REM Move ball
400 LET oldx=xpos
410 LET oldy=ypos
420 LET xpos=xpos+xdir
425 IF xpos>1 THEN IF xpos<xma
x THEN GO TO 440
430 LET xpos=oldx: LET xdir=INT
(RND*7+1)*-SGN xdir
435 BEEP .03,15
440 LET ypos=ypos+ydir
445 IF ypos>7 THEN IF ypos<yma
x+7 THEN GO TO 460
450 LET ypos=oldy: LET ydir=INT
(RND*5+1)*-SGN ydir
455 BEEP .03,30
460 LET d=oldx AND oldy=shape+U
SR 31000
470 LET shape=shape+1-4*(shape=
147)
480 LET d=xpos AND ypos=shape+U
SR 31000
490 GO TO 400
590 REM Ball definition
600 DATA 60,66,135,143,143,159,
126,60
610 DATA 60,66,193,225,249,253,
126,60
620 DATA 60,126,249,241,241,225,
66,60
630 DATA 60,126,191,159,135,131,
66,60
640 DATA 0

```

A demonstration program featuring a ball bouncing around the screen at a variety of speeds. (Make sure you type commas and not semicolons in line 330.)

The assembler listing starts with the definition of a few constants used later in the program. These are defined at the head of the listing so that they can be checked and altered easily. They also make the program easier to read, especially if it doesn't immediately spring to mind that, say, 5C65H is the address of the Maths stack pointer! Three ROM routines have been used, to minimise the program size and keep things simple.

The machine code is in three main sections. First, the parameters (the coordinates and character number) are checked, then the character definition is located, and finally the character is positioned on the screen. The parameter checking relies on the way the Spectrum evaluates expressions. In a simple sum like:

```
PRINT 2+3*4
```

the computer must work out the multiplication before it does the addition. This is because the correct answer is 14 (or 2+12), not 20 (5*4).

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SMOOTH MOVES

The *Smooth Move* code takes advantage of the way Basic works out the results of a calculation, by ensuring that the co-ordinates and character number have been worked out, but not combined together, as the USR call is performed. The three numbers are languishing on a 'maths stack' of temporary results during the USR call. The machine code can read the numbers which have been so helpfully made ready by Basic, and then put things tidy afterwards so that Basic can carry on once the USR call is over.

```

FE10 2600      1630 INDEX LD H,0
FE12 6F        1640 LD L,A
FE13 29        1650 ADD HL,HL
FE14 29        1660 ADD HL,HL
FE15 29        1670 ADD HL,HL
FE16 19        1680 ADD HL,DE
FE17 1806      1690 JR GFONT
               1700 ;
FE19 CD380B    1710 BLOCK CALL MAKEB
FE1C 21925C    1720 LD HL,BLKCH
FE1F E5        1730 GFONT PUSH HL
FE20 DDE1      1740 POP IX
               1750 ;
               "Fetch Y coordinate"
FE22 CDA22D    1760 CALL POP_A
FE25 67        1770 LD H,A
               1780 ;
               "Fetch X coordinate"
FE26 E5        1790 PUSH HL
FE27 CDA22D    1800 CALL POP_A
FE2A E1        1810 POP HL
FE2B 6F        1820 LD L,A
FE2C E5        1830 PUSH HL
               1840 ;
               "Process 8 screen lines"
FE2D 0E08      1850 LD C,B
FE2F E1        1860 PLINE POP HL
               1870 ;
               "Step up to next line"
FE30 25        1880 DEC H
FE31 E5        1890 PUSH HL
FE32 24        1900 INC H
               1910 ;
               "Convert coord in H,L"
               1920 ;
               "to address in HL & A"
FE33 C5        1930 PUSH BC
FE34 44        1940 LD B,H
FE35 4D        1950 LD C,L
FE36 CDA22D    1960 CALL PIXEL
FE39 C1        1970 POP BC
               1980 ;
               "Copy bit offset to B"
FE3A 47        1990 LD B,A
               2000 ;
               "See if char is on grid"
FE3B AF        2010 XOR A
FE3C B0        2020 OR B
               2030 ;
               "Read font anyway"
FE3D DD7E00    2040 LD A,(IX+0)
               2050 ;
               "Store NOW if on grid"
FE40 2B11      2060 JR Z,STORE
               2070 ;
               "Generate 16 bit mask"
FE42 EB        2080 EX DE,HL
FE43 2600      2090 LD H,0
FE45 6F        2100 LD L,A
               2110 ;
               "Reverse shift count"
FE46 3E08      2120 LD A,8
FE48 90        2130 SUB B
FE49 47        2140 LD B,A
FE4A 29        2150 SHIFT ADD HL,HL
FE4B 10FD      2160 DJNZ SHIFT
               2170 ;
               "Put mask in DE"
FE4D EB        2180 EX DE,HL
               2190 ;
               "Mix into the display"
FE4E 7E        2200 LD A,(HL)
FE4F AA        2210 XOR D
FE50 77        2220 LD (HL),A
FE51 23        2230 INC HL
FE52 7B        2240 LD A,E
FE53 AE        2250 STORE XOR (HL)
FE54 77        2260 LD (HL),A
               2270 ;
               "Advance through font"
FE55 DD23      2280 INC IX
               2290 ;
               "Count one line done"
FE57 0D        2300 DEC C
FE58 20D5      2310 JR NZ,PLINE
               2320 ;
               "Tidy stacks; n.b. BC=0"
FE5A E1        2330 POP HL
FE5B E1        2340 POP HL
FE5C 22655C    2350 LD (STACK),HL
FE5F C9        2360 RET
               2370 END

```

```

100 REM SMOOTH MOVE LOADER
110 REM By Simon N Goodwin
120 REM
200 INPUT "Load address";L
210 LET c=0
220 FOR i=L TO L+119
230 READ d
240 LET c=c+d
250 POKE i,d
260 NEXT i
270 IF c<>13017 THEN PRINT "Error in DATA": STOP
280 PRINT "Position character c
AT x,y with"
290 PRINT "RANDOMIZE x AND y =
c+USR ";i
300 PRINT "Save everything, ju
st in case..."
310 SAVE "SMOOTH/BAS"
320 SAVE "SMOOTH/COD"CODE L,120
330 STOP
400 DATA 42,101,92,229,235,42
410 DATA 99,92,1,15,0,9
420 DATA 237,82,40,2,207,25
430 DATA 205,162,45,254,128,56
440 DATA 11,71,214,144,56,19
450 DATA 237,91,123,92,24,4
460 DATA 237,91,54,92,38,0
470 DATA 111,41,41,41,25,24
480 DATA 6,205,56,11,33,146
490 DATA 92,229,221,225,205,162
500 DATA 45,103,229,205,162,45
510 DATA 225,111,229,14,8,225
520 DATA 37,229,36,197,68,77
530 DATA 205,170,34,193,71,175
540 DATA 176,221,126,0,40,17
550 DATA 235,38,0,111,62,8
560 DATA 144,71,41,16,253,235
570 DATA 126,170,119,35,123,174
580 DATA 119,221,35,13,32,213
590 DATA 225,225,34,101,92,201

```

If you've not yet got hold of an assembler, here's a Basic loader program allowing you to load *Smooth Move*.

This gives us a convenient way of passing numbers from Basic to machine code, without the hassle of PEEKing and POKEing. We can ensure that temporary results are ready by our choice of separators between the co-ordinates. In the command:

RANDOMIZE x AND y = c + USR a

Basic *must* do the addition first, to get the correct answer — adding is always done before comparison (=) and comparisons are done before AND. This idea is explained on page 12 of the thin 'Introduction' manual which came with your Spectrum.

On the way through the expression, Basic works out any calculations needed to find X, Y and C, since those calculations should have a higher priority than the 'plus' at the end of the line.

If you want to use equals, AND, or other so-called 'logical operations' in

your calculation of x, y and c, you must put the relevant calculations in brackets, so that Basic will work the whole value out before it reaches the USR call. A list of priorities is on page 201 of the Spectrum manual. Logical operations have priority '2', '3', '4' or '5'.

Basic puts temporary results in an area called the 'maths stack'. Two system variables are used to mark the top and bottom of this area: each value stored within it takes up five bytes.

Line 1340-1450 of the assembler are used to check that the maths stack is 15 bytes long when the USR call is reached: this means that three values are ready. If the stack does not contain three values, the routine stops with a 'Parameter' error — this is generated by lines 1440 and 1450.

A CHARACTER STUDY

The ROM subroutine POP_A is used to read a number from the maths stack and into the A register. Lines 1470-1560 fetch the character code, which is the last thing calculated and hence at the 'top' of the stack. They test the code to decide whether the character is a block graphic, a user-defined graphic or an ASCII character. There's no definition of the block graphics in the ROM — those are generated as required by a routine called MAKEB, which puts the pattern specified by a code in the B register at address BLKCH.

In the case of ASCII or user-defined characters, the routine finds the appro-

priate start address from the system variables (UDGS points to the user-defined graphics and CHARS points to the ASCII symbols). The character code is multiplied by eight (since each definition takes eight bytes) and the location of the character is found by adding the start address to the resultant value. GFONT copies the address of the character definition into register IX, for safe-keeping.

POP_A is used twice more to fetch the y and x co-ordinates where the character is to be displayed. The loop from PLINE onwards puts the character into video memory, one line at a time. Register C is used to count the lines.

The program takes the co-ordinates of each line and uses a ROM call to find the address where that line should appear. The ROM subroutine named PIXEL takes x and y co-ordinates in registers C and B, returning with the address of the byte required in HL and the position within the byte in A. The character definition is fetched and shifted sideways if need be.

Each line of the Spectrum display corresponds to 32 bytes of video memory. The contents of that memory determines what's displayed on the line. The normal Spectrum PRINT routine uses one byte per character on each line, which means that characters cannot be printed partly in one byte and partly in the next. *Smooth Move* allows you to split characters between one byte and the next (hence the finer control over positioning). The character code is put into

one end of the HL register pair, which is shifted sideways until it's at the required place on the boundary between H and L. The ADD HL,HL instruction is used to shift the value — every time you add a binary value to itself it moves one place to the left, because each column has twice the value of the one to its right.

At STORE the graphic line is mixed into the display with the XOR instruction — the machine code equivalent of PRINT OVER. The program loops back to PLINE until all eight lines of the character have been positioned.

TIDYING UP

The routine can't return to Basic until both stacks — the processor stack and the maths stack — have been put back the way they were found. Line 2330 throws away the coordinate information which was on the processor stack. Finally, the value of the maths stack pointer is retrieved, so that Basic doesn't get confused by the sudden loss of three data items. The USR function returns the value zero, since B and C have both counted down to nothing.

This program is only an introduction to Hi-res animation on the Spectrum. The best graphic routines handle large shapes, with automatic animation and motion, collision detection, and so forth. One day I might divulge the secrets of the *YS Sprite System*, which puts most of the power of a dedicated arcade machine at your fingertips — that's if I ever finish writing it...! 

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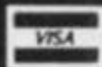
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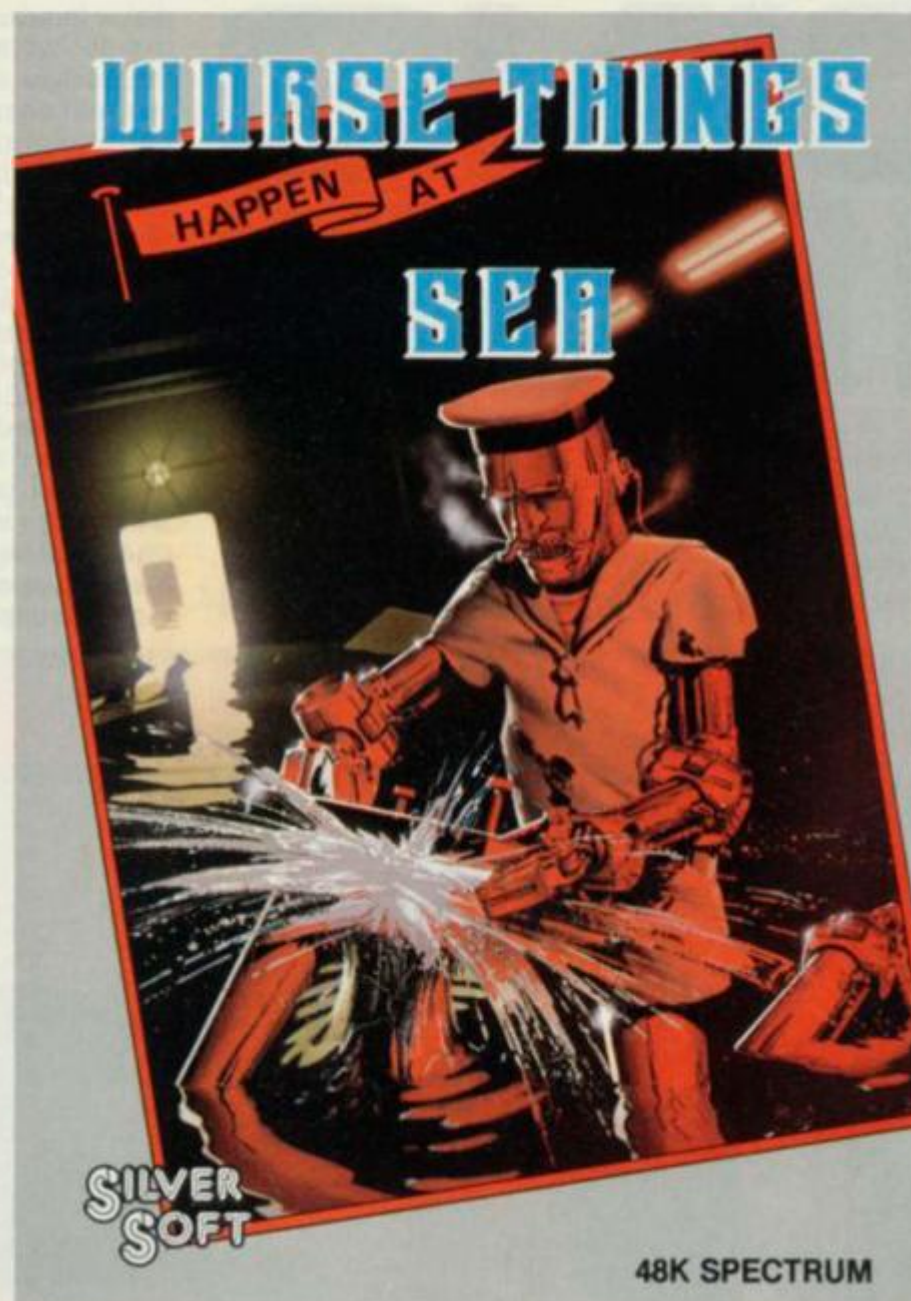


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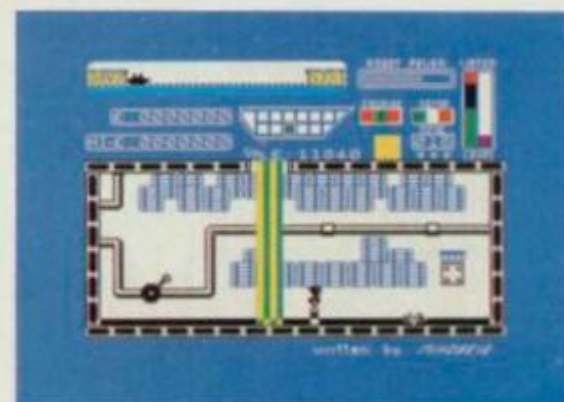
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GOING OVER BOARDS

Feeling out of touch with your Spectrum? Then join Henry Budgett as he fingers his way through five replacement 'boards' — all out to prove that pressing keys doesn't have to be a rubbery experience.

Ask a hundred owners of the Spectrum to point out their least favourite aspect of the machine and it's odds on that 99 per cent will plump for the keyboard as the prime culprit — which is hardly surprising, considering it feels not unlike a hunk of dead meat! Added to the peculiarities of its india-rubber action are the allied quirks of a non-standard spacing, a fiendishly complicated system of Shifts and Symbol Shifts to access the various keywords, and punctuation symbols littered everywhere.

While Sinclair Research's revolutionary keyword and syntax checking system works well enough for the beginner, it tends to stifle the familiarity that occurs on a more regular kind of computer keyboard. Remember, however much fast typing is simply not possible on a squidgy

Lo»Profile Keyboard

Price £49.95

Supplier Advanced Memory Systems, Woodside Technology Centre, Green Lane, Appleton, Warrington WA4 5NG.

The description 'Big, Black but Slim' might easily be misconstrued by some, but as dedicated readers of a computer magazine I'm sure you'll realise at once that I'm talking about the Lo»»Profile keyboard.

Internally, the keyboard can only accept the ZX Spectrum's main PCB — the various connectors hang out the back through slots, allowing you to add whatever's necessary. It comes supplied with a photocopy of an advertisement for the device — presumably to pass on to a friend — and a single sheet of instructions showing you how to fit it all together. Using logic, it's easy enough to assemble but nowhere does it mention that you've got to unplug the old keyboard, or that the Spectrum's PCB must go in the right way round.

Once fitted, at first sight it looks really nice, with a decent set of keys all properly laid out and a numeric pad set off to the right. All the legends are printed clearly on the keytops in the same colours as the original; the only one missing is Break — which ought to be on the Space bar, but isn't. The cursor keys are repeated on the numeric keypad that features its own Caps Shift and '.' keys as well.

The casing is much wider than it needs to be — presumably designed on the premise that bigger looks better — and although the top is made of a substantial plastic, the base isn't and tends to 'give' under

Lo»Profile Keyboard

The Lo Profile's keytop legends are printed clearly in the same colours as the original. Take care with the keyboard surround as this does seem rather flexible.

The cursor keys are repeated on the numeric keypad; also featured are a separate Caps Shift and '.' key as well.



The top of the case is constructed from substantial plastic; the bottom of the unit, however, isn't and tends to 'give' under pressure.

Some of the keyboard's keys are slightly bigger than on other units, for example the enter key; this is a feature 'stolen' from the larger personal computers.

pressure. The keyboard surround is also rather flexible; it has provision for 11 mounting plates but only six were fitted.

Overall, the unit worked very well, but the initial feeling that it looked smart slowly evaporated once it had sat on the desk for an hour or two. But for those who hold great stead by personal appearances, the Lo»»Profile is definitely a 'looker'.

FDS Keyboard

Price: £49.95

Supplier Fuller Micro Systems, The ZX Centre, 71 Dale Street, Liverpool 2.

A sleek, black plastic casing surrounds a contender that's really rather pleasant to look at. But the first obvious problem was a complete lack of any instructions — such is a reviewer's lot.

Still, inside the case I found two sets of possible mountings for the Spectrum's PCB — and as only one clears the keyboard, that was easy to solve. Unfortunately, only two of the four posts lined up with corresponding holes on the PCB — which is hardly good news from the mounting point of view. The power lead from the transformer has to go to the keyboard first, and a short lead from here connects to the PCB.

There appear to be mountings for the transformer but I suspect these might be best ignored for safety reasons. One of the two ribbon cables was damaged, a wire having broken off at the joint between the cable and the plug; both were rather short, making installation harder than it should have been.

The standard set of Spectrum keys have been added-to

in an intelligent way, with a cluster of cursor keys, a full-size Space bar and a Shift key on each side of the keyboard. Also included are keys designated Rubout, f1, f2 and Sym — all labelled in bright red; the remainder are grey or black.

Once in operation I discovered the extra keys, f1 and f2, select the lower and upper keywords printed on the keytops — a neat idea and one which saves playing octaves across the keys to reach both Shift and Symbol Shift. The legends are screen-printed — which is one better than stick-on labels, but so badly done in some cases that it's a toss-up which is the least desirable method.

Overall, but for the quality of the finishing touches, I'd have to proclaim the FDS a pretty decent unit. Better keytop printing is a must and the

membrane, still there are several word-processing programs available!

Obviously, many of the major objections could be alleviated by the simple bolting-on of a full QWERTY keyboard that uses full-travel keys; this, however, is surely not the ideal answer. Many of the difficulties experienced by users trying to cope with the idiosyncratic shifting system could be solved through the addition of extra keys to handle the more commonly occurring characters — such as the punctuation and mathematical symbols, and the Delete key.

While carrying out such re-organisation, an astute designer can also build-in switches to control the power and isolate the EAR lead while recording. And further enhancements could include a case big enough to hold various

	Lo-Profile	Transform	dK'Tronics	Fuller FDS	Ricoll
Keyboard type	Mechanical	Mechanical	Mechanical	Mechanical	Mechanical
Action	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Fair
Total keys	53	60	52	51	42
Numeric keypad	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Cursor keypad	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Function keys	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Extra Shift keys	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Full Space bar	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Size (mm)	436×218×50	407×220×75	350×250×70	340×225×70	285×205×60
Weight (kg)	0.85	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.5
Case material	Plastic	Metal	Plastic	Plastic	Metal
Label method	Screenprint	Screenprint	Stick-on	Screenprint	Stick-on
MIC switch	No	No	No	No	No
Power unit inside	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Power switch	No	Yes	No	No	No

installation of the PCB needs to be made much more secure. And, as usual, I still have serious reservations about installing the power supply unit inside the box.

Transform Keyboard

Price: £69.95

Supplier Transform Ltd, 41 Keats House, Porchester Mead, Beckenham, Kent.

This case has obviously been designed to look nice, and it certainly does — for almost £70, you'd have every right to expect something special.

Constructed from metal, the unit obviously presented its designers with the problem of isolating the Spectrum's PCB from its new case. Their solution was to request that you leave the bottom half of the computer's casing attached to the PCB — hardly the neatest of ways around the difficulty, but it does solve the problem.

The power supply goes in too, and the whole thing (plus case) is stuck down with one of those double-sided pads.

Both a power switch and LED are provided but you'll have to be adept with a soldering iron to fit them; the instructions for fitting these extras are not at all clear. Another source of worry is the fact that the case isn't earthed; once again, you've got mains voltages hanging around, just waiting to bite you.

While the Ricoll unit is built of solid metal that's formed into a proper box, the Transform keyboard is flimsy by comparison. Littered with sharp-angled corners, it feels as if the slightest pressure could collapse it; with such little support, the board is prone to excessive flexing.

There are extra keyboard facilities on-board which include both Delete and Edit

Transform Keyboard

A separate numeric keypad is provided to the right of the main keyboard; all functions of the cursor keys are reproduced along with separate Caps Shift and ' keys.

An LED is provided on top of the unit to tell you if the keyboard is powered up.

Extra on-board keying facilities include single Edit and Delete keys, as well as a key to get you into 'E' mode. The keytops are well screen-printed, but there is a slight problem with the keyboard itself being prone to flexing.

An On/Off switch is positioned on the side of the unit — if you're adept enough with a soldering iron to fit it that is.

FDS Keyboard

The case itself is constructed from strong ABS plastic.

The ventilation slots may provide the means of cooling an overheating power supply, but take care not to drop a paper clip or something in there... or there could be trouble!

Features of the keyboard include separate cursor keys, two function keys to allow a simple method of accessing those tricky extended modes, and a single delete key.

The moulded keys make this one of the more attractive choices of add-on keyboard, but the quality of the screen-printing leave a little to be desired.

keys, as well as a full numeric keypad; once again, however, the Break function isn't labelled — but I'm sure you'll find it.

Dk'Tronics Cased Keyboard

Price: £45

Supplier Dk'Tronics, Unit 6, Shire Hill Industrial Estate, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3AQ

Definitely one for the DIY fanatic here! A really solid, black plastic case with a real key copy of the Spectrum's existing keyboard on the left and a 12-key numeric/editing keypad on the right.

The Spectrum's PCB fixes on to four plastic pillars, and for that you're expected to use the screws that came out of the computer — so don't lose any of them! The power supply will also fit inside the case, although

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GOING OVER BOARDS

components of the system . . . such as the power supply, Microdrive, Interface 1 and other add-ons. All these possible options have been considered while judging the five keyboards under test.

So, the question we're going to be asking ourselves is: just how far have the manufacturers gone towards creating the 'ideal' replacement? But there's a sting in the tail. Add a keyboard to your Spectrum and, although you're going to be enhancing its usefulness, you're going to raise its overall price to a level where you're justified in expecting something very special indeed. That's the high level

of criteria to which the five units here have been subjected.

CONCLUSION

Just one of the keyboards on test comes close to meeting the exacting criteria I initially laid down for a replacement unit, and that's the Fuller FDS; even here the finishing touches let it down a bit. From a manufacture point of view, the best made by far was the product from Ricoll; given a set of decently engraved keytops, this would rate very highly as a direct replacement system — and it's also quite attractively priced.

Of the rest, the Lo>>> Profile had most to offer but lacked the extra function keys of the Fuller model and could also do with more support for its keyboard. The Dk'Tronics unit needs to be

supplied with the keys engraved or moulded — stick-on labels that the customer has to apply are not really sufficient. Otherwise it's a substantial add-on.

The Transform device seems to be a little over-priced for the facilities it has to offer over its cheaper rivals. Despite that it's recently been rated "top keyboard at the moment" by one of our magazine rivals; maybe you should check it out to see if I've missed an endearing quality or two.

On a final note, now that Sinclair Research has perfected the newer type of membrane — as used on the QL — it would be interesting to speculate whether the add-on companies are likely to make the switch too. It could be the key to success!

it has to be removed from its casing before you can install it. That means there's a healthy 240 volts floating just an inch or so away from the Spectrum PCB and keyboard. The manual points out that mains can kill — but even if nothing untoward happens, the mains hum will probably affect the picture quality.

The DIY element comes in when you find the sheet of self-adhesive stickers, to be used for labelling the blank keytops! The result is cheap, messy and unlikely to last as long as the legends painted on Uncle Sir Clive's original rubber squares. Insufficient support is provided for both the keyboard and keypad (which sag under pressure) but the key actions are quite nice.

That apart, if the keyboard came supplied with the keytops engraved or moulded, then I'd have to vote it a very reasonable product.

Ricoll Electronics RIKBI

Price: £37.95

Supplier Ricoll Electronics,
48 Southport Road, Ormskirk,
Lancashire L39 1QR.

If you see sheer weight as a good judge of a product's quality, you're certain to be pleased with this one! Tipping the scales at a good old 1.5kg, this metal-cased keyboard seemed at first to be a solid prospect.

The system keyboard support proves better than that offered by many a rival and the main board stays firmly locked on to four metal studs mounted

Ricoll Electronics RIKBI

The RIKBI is the most attractive of keyboards — built using metal-cased and high quality plastics at over £300. It is extremely quiet and fast.

The RIKBI keyboard unit with all sticky-back plastic affixed to have used on the Dk'Tronics unit — they have never been stuck on the RIKBI.

Apart from the full-sized Space bar, the keyboard is an exact replica of the Spectrum original.



Dk'Tronics Cased Keyboard

Gaps are left at the back of the keyboard unit allowing the user to make use of the expansion sockets at the back of the Spectrum. This feature is similar on all the units reviewed.

The case is constructed from strong ABS plastic.



The legends for the keytops come as squares of printed sticky-back plastic that have to be stuck to the right keys DIY-style.

The main keyboard is an exact copy of the Spectrum original although a numeric keypad is provided on the right — useful for Hex entry.

on the base. The 'manual' consists of two photocopied sheets, plus an extra note slipped in; this warns that one of the leads to the keyboard must be twisted, and that the user should beware of long component leads from the Spectrum's PCB shorting out on the metal base. Shudder!

Unfortunately, apart from its full-size Space bar, the device is once again a real key copy of the original. But with no numeric keyboard added the unit is certainly compact and, being built of heavy gauge metal, it's virtually guaranteed to last. The same, however, cannot be said of the keyboard itself — it uses nasty little keytops that feature stick-on legends. Oh well, at least they've been stuck on for you!

This could have been a winner, had the quality of the keyboard matched up to that of the casing. As it is it's still a whole lot better than the Spectrum's rubber pads and very reasonable at the price.

The Quill

48K Spectrum



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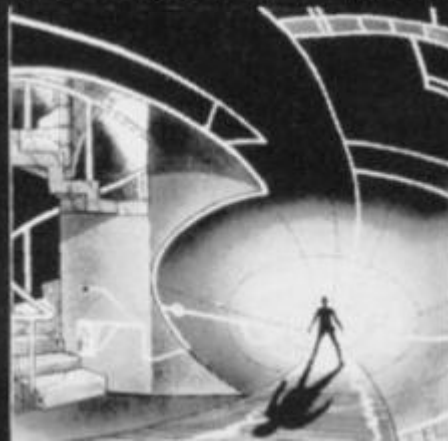
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SUDDENLY, IT'S THE
64K
SPECTRUM!

Recent models of the ZX Spectrum have come supplied with 64K of internal memory, rather than the normal 48K. But, reports Simon Goodwin, the extra RAM is deliberately disabled so that you can't use it...

The latest version of our beloved Speccy, the Issue 3 Mark 5, can be distinguished by a letter 'v' printed on the circuit board after the issue number. Perhaps more noticeable is the revised board layout, which leaves the computer with only eight RAM chips fitted, rather than the 16 used in earlier versions of the 48K Spectrum. (Usual warning. Bear in mind that you could void your guarantee if Sinclair Research realises you've taken the computer apart.)

The original Spectrum design contained 16K bytes of memory, supplied in eight chips. Each chip contained 16K bits and, since there are eight bits in a byte, everything added up. The 48K version of the computer used another eight RAM chips to provide a further 32K bytes of memory. At first (on Issue 1 Spectrums) these additional chips were fitted on an extra plug-in board inside the computer. Later, a re-design ensured that the 32K chips could be fitted directly into the main board.

CHEAP CHIP CHATTER

The snag — from Sinclair Research's point of view — was that 32K chips were expensive, and to understand this you need to know a little about the way RAM is manufactured. For various reasons, memory chips are made on square pieces of silicon. In principle each chip is just a matrix of memory cells and, since the matrix is square, a 'double-size' chip contains four times as many cells as a regular one — the size is doubled both vertically and horizontally.

When micros first became feasible, memory chips contained 1024 cells — 1K bits. Antique collectors among you may recall the '2102' chip — eight of these were needed to produce 1K byte, since there are eight bits in a byte. It wasn't long before 4K bit chips such as the 4007 and 2114 were available. Then everything got scaled up once again, and we were left with the 4116, the 16K bit chip which was — until recently — the industry standard.

Anyhow, the sequence of standard memory sizes goes directly from 16K to 64K, and it isn't easy to get hold of 32K.

components. One firm which created a demand for 32K RAMs was Tandy; it wanted to put 32K of memory into the eight sockets in its Colour Computer.

LOSING YOUR MEMORY

This is where things get complicated. Despite the square shape of chips the cells are usually arranged on the silicon in two rectangular groups of 8K, 32K or whatever. The chip industry has a very high failure rate, especially on new types of component, so many 64K chips were rejected because they were 'flawed' —

**... You could even
run the CP/M
operating system
on a Spectrum.
That would upset
a few
manufacturers!**

some of the cells didn't work.

Tandy was able to test each half of the 64K chips separately, and sift out the ones which were half-working — hey presto, a 32K RAM chip. Meanwhile, in the UK, Dragon Data had to put up with double the amount of soldering and the extra circuit-space needed to provide 32K of memory in two 16K lumps.

A similar situation must have faced Sinclair Research when the 48K Spectrum was designed. Rather than try to cram an extra 16 chips into the already-crowded computer, it chose to use eight 32K chips.

An alternative solution appears in the Acorn Electron, which uses four 64K bit chips and special hardware to read 32K bytes from them in two steps. This is cheap and simple, but it slows down the computer since each chip must be read twice to fetch a single byte.

NOT AN ISSUE

So the first three issues of the Spectrum used a combination of eight 16K chips and eight 32K ones. The latest machines depart from that combination, but Sinclair Research has been very quiet about the alteration.

There was a great fuss when an earlier change in the design of the computer meant that Issue 3 machines used a subtly different keyboard interface; a few programs which had worked on earlier computers ignored the keys of an Issue 3 machine. This change — minor though it was — attracted considerable flak and Sinclair Research became coy about subsequent alterations to the machine.

But the design didn't stay fixed, both for reasons of performance and — perhaps more crucially — economics. Code letters were added to the issue numbers, so that revisions could be recorded without disturbing the punters.

MARKED OUT

The first re-design was dubbed the Issue 3 Mark 4, and can be distinguished by the roman numerals 'iv' printed on the circuit board after the issue number. In this case the change involved is believed to be slight, and essentially only of interest to repair-engineers. The next and — to the best of our knowledge — latest change has been rather more fundamental.

The issue 3 Mark 5 Spectrum contains just eight 64K memory chips. Improvements in the production of large memories had already forced other manufacturers to use full-blown 64K chips in 32K computers — one half was just left idle. The economics of this arrangement didn't upset the makers much, since the price of all the large memories had fallen steadily and half-faulty chips had ended up at almost the same price as fully-working ones.

The need for an 'upgradeable' design had decreased since most users were buying 48K machines at once, rather than purchasing the 16K model and upgrading it to 48K later. At first the price difference between models was £50 — now it has fallen to £30, and the 48K computer is selling for roughly the original price of the 16K machine. It also now sells about ten times as well as the 16K version.

The two-stage memory design was costly. It was intended to allow dealers to plug in an extra 32K, but in fact it ends up creating extra assembly work — since Sinclair Research has to plug in the extra RAM before the machine can be sold. A new design was produced, using 64K chips throughout, with no facility to remove chips and move back down to 16K.

To leave room for the 16K ROM, Sinclair Research had to disable a quarter of each 64K chip. This still gave the usual 48K, but with half the previous number of components — simplifying the manufacture, reducing power-consumption and saving money. This means that some of us may have an extra 16K of RAM lurking in the depths of our 48K sand-

SUDDENLY, IT'S THE 64K SPECTRUM!

wich toasters. The snag is that you can't use the extra memory, even though it's powered up, tested and in full working order. There's apparently no difference in performance between a 48K Spectrum and a 64K Mark 5 machine.

POSTAL PROCESSING

The Spectrum uses a Z80 processor, which can only address — or control — 64K of memory directly. The computer contains 16K of vital ROM without which it would completely ignore the user, so we're only left with an absolute maximum of 48K. This 64K limit is rather like having a postman who can only remember house numbers of up to three digits — bad news if you live at number 1175, since your post ends up at number 175 (I once had a house in Birmingham where precisely this happened).

You can get around the problem by having a new postman who can handle longer numbers (that is, a new processor — such as the QL's 68008 — which can address 1024K). Alternatively, you

could duplicate some addresses and teach the postman to choose between the duplicates, according to where he or she has been previously. In computers, this technique is called 'paging': it's used in the ZX81 add-on boards made by Memotech.

USING YOUR 64K

So far it may seem as if there are no real advantages in owning a Mark 5 Spectrum. This is true, unless you're interested in voiding your warranty and digging around inside the computer. Hardware modifications will certainly be needed to bring the extra 16K under software control, but they'll be quite simple — certainly less complicated than the 'SoftROM' project presented in issue 2 of YS. That design allowed users to change the contents of the ROM area by putting 16K of RAM in its place; perhaps Mike Lord will come up with a revised project for Mark 5 Spectrum owners?

Once you've got your extra RAM under software control, the possibilities are endless. The extra space can be used for machine code or other languages (so long as you don't destroy crucial information such as the font, and the code used to handle the keyboard and display). You could just use the memory to correct the bugs in the Spectrum ROM, or as a neat way of patching in extra routines of your own. If you can re-locate the Spectrum screen display and re-write the device drivers (which handle the keys,

display, printer and so on) — you could even run the CP/M operating system on a Spectrum. That would upset a few manufacturers!

Another approach would be to use paging to provide a choice between two 16K 'banks' of memory; an OUT instruction could be used to swap the banks. With care this would allow you to use 64K of RAM as well as the 16K ROM, but commercial software wouldn't use the facility and you'd have to adapt your own programs to select different banks as required. Your Spectrum would behave as if it had 16K ROM, 32K of normal RAM plus two 16K RAM lumps which used the same addresses and could only be accessed one at a time.

FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

There may be other reasons why Sinclair Research has kept quiet about the re-design of the Spectrum. It could be a sign that the 16K Spectrum will soon be discontinued — certainly the upgrade procedure from a 16K to 48K machine will have to change, since there'll be no room for the 16K chips once the 64K ones are fitted. It's also possible that the retail price of the Spectrum could be cut further, now that the new design is on the market. The production cost of a Spectrum should drop if only eight memories are used.

If you find any secret quirks of the Mark 5 Spectrum, YS would like to hear about it. And if you've just bought a Mark 6 machine... **VS**

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SOFTWARE

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No sooner than he had accomplished this mission, he was summoned by Time Lord Hamilton (known as Super Ham to his friends) to go to DOOMSDAY CASTLE and to save the Universe from the infinitely evil Scarthax, this being no small task took several megayears. By this time Ziggy was completely exhausted, his capsule battered, dented and wobbling as he limps in the direction of home, a real super hero of our time. Unable to leave the Universe undefended he radioed his great friend and colleague Beaky on the planet of Crackit to stand guard until his return.

Beaky would normally assume this role without a second thought, however he had his own problems to face for the dreaded Eggsnatchers had returned to threaten the very existence of his breed. Beaky's survival instincts do not allow him to leave Crackit until he has reared enough chicks to fight off the Eggsnatchers. In order to crack it, he must pass through 12 different stages each getting progressively harder.

So we have it, Ziggy returning home for a complete refit under the illusion that Beaky is defending the Universe, surely it can't take Beaky that long to secure his own species and when will Ziggy be back.....?"

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RAPSCALLION

RAP

New from Bug-Byte and tipped for the top comes RapsCALLION — a multi-screen graphic adventure. Ross Holman finds out whether it lives up to the claims of being "the next Manic Miner"...

First impressions of games can easily be misleading, and this was certainly the case with *RapsCALLION*. Described by Bug-Byte as a "fully animated cartoon adventure", you play the part of a usurped king who has had his crown and castle stolen by RapsCALLION the Rogue — and as if this wasn't humiliation enough, he's then incarcerated in his own dungeon.

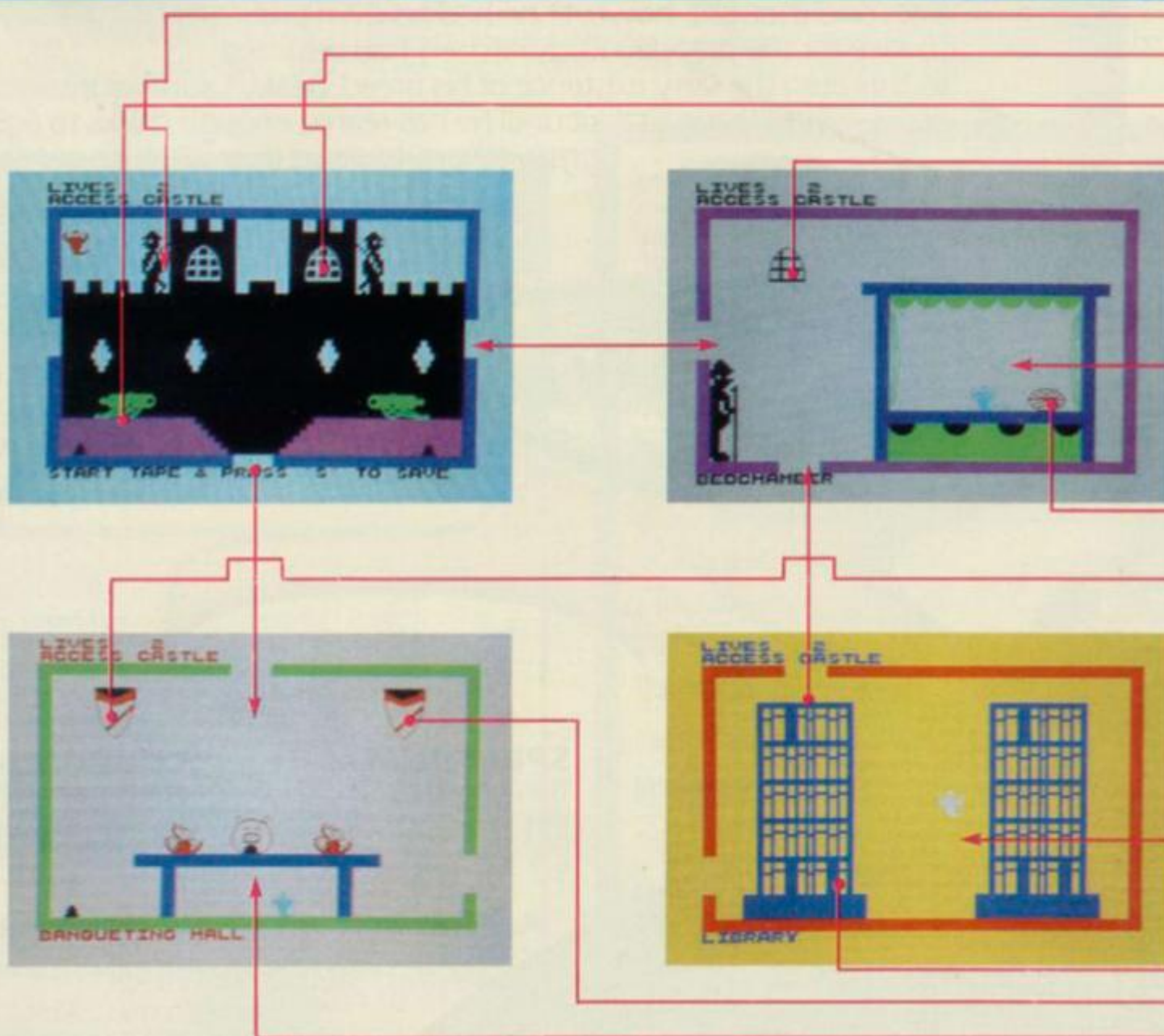
But help is at hand in the shape of a handy Fairy Princess. Not only does she set him free, she also turns him into a bird — giving him the ability to transform at will into a fly, while suffering only the loss of one of his six lives. Once in this bugged state you, the player, can control the character, moving around the forty-plus rooms of the castle (actually, I found 41 altogether) attempting to re-capture his

rightful inheritance.

GRIPPING GRAPHICS?

The loading screen, now practically an art form for some companies, is not particularly gripping, but in its favour it does show some of the graphics used in the game. In fact, one unusual feature of much of the *RapsCALLION* graphics is that they're drawn at half resolution — giving

THE THIRD DOMAIN-INSIDE



a similar chunky look as found on Commodore machines but without, of course, the multi-colour. It's hard to say whether this was done to create an individual style, or just used as a device to save memory; perhaps it was laziness! Anyway, after a long load, you're greeted by a page of instructions, followed by more and more. Sensibly, you have the option of skipping past them to the control options.

Wading through the instructions, you'll find all you need to know about the game. You discover there are three distinct sections, called The Wilderness, The Magic Labyrinth and finally, The Castle itself. To progress on to the next level, you need to complete a set task; for example, to leave The Wilderness, you have to collect the key to The Magic Labyrinth. Some rooms contain large diamonds which, when touched, impart useful information; others have pixies jumping up and down on toadstools, who generously give you gifts.

You're offered a comprehensive list of joystick options — additionally, there are two keyboard control layouts. A nice touch is that you can SAVE your current

status at any time during a game, then LOAD it in again to continue from where it left off. The trouble then is if you carry on to complete the game, you're only going to get a lease rather than full freehold of The Castle. One thing, though — you're only given the option to LOAD the SAVED details once; just before the first game. If you want to play from the same point again, you'll have to re-LOAD the whole game, which is very tedious.

IN THE WILDERNESS

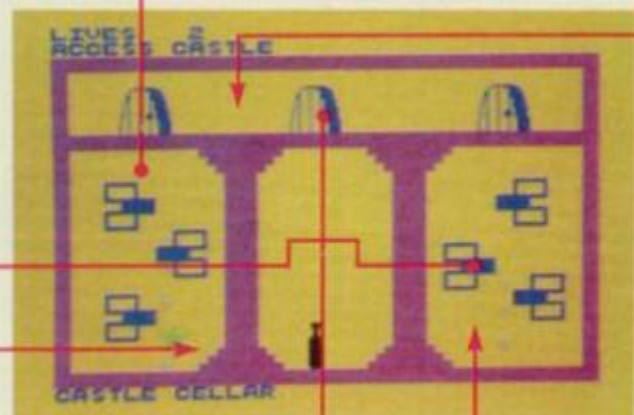
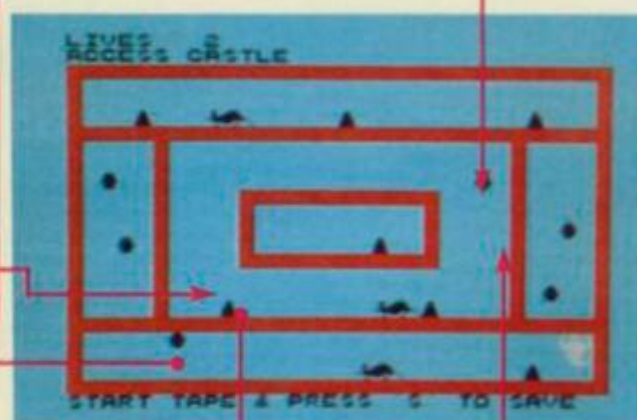
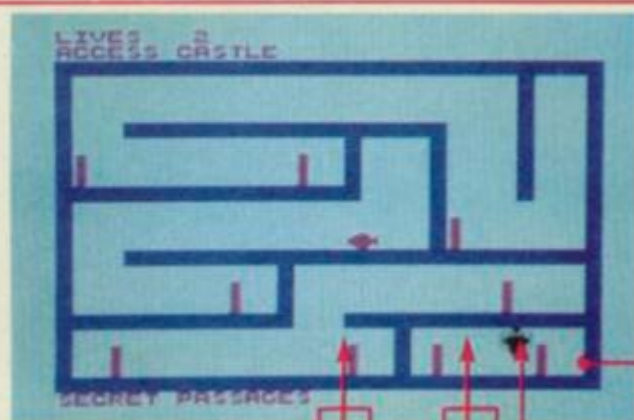
Off we go, and the first thing we see is the Dungeon, complete with skeleton and Rapscaillon the Rogue placing the king in chains. Up comes the Fairy Princess who turns him into a bird and then buzzes off (to coin a phrase). At the top of the screen, there's an indicator of lives left, current sector, and any objects you've collected or powers you possess; at the bottom is the name of the current room. Moving around, you soon realise that all the graphics move by cursor block stages and any animation only takes place over two frames — which is rather disappointing. With many of the timing and

manipulative skills removed, *Rapscaillon* is no *Atic Atac* or *Jet Set Willy*, even so, interest is maintained by the degree of complexity and variation — not to mention the large, colourful graphics.

Each room contains a number of large fixed graphics and sometimes large moving graphics. Cats, for example, are six by six cursors, and smaller Hi-res graphics (spiders, for instance) are two by two cursors. Gaps in a room's border signify doors to other rooms. Most graphics are harmless and you can move through them without damage; some (usually those falling from above) will slow you down ... touching flames or sparks will speed you up. There's subtlety too, because some graphics will kill or affect you, depending on the guise you're in at the time; for instance, cats kill the bird but not the fly — flies on the other hand, get trapped in spider's webs and the only way out is to transform into a bird, losing a life in the process.

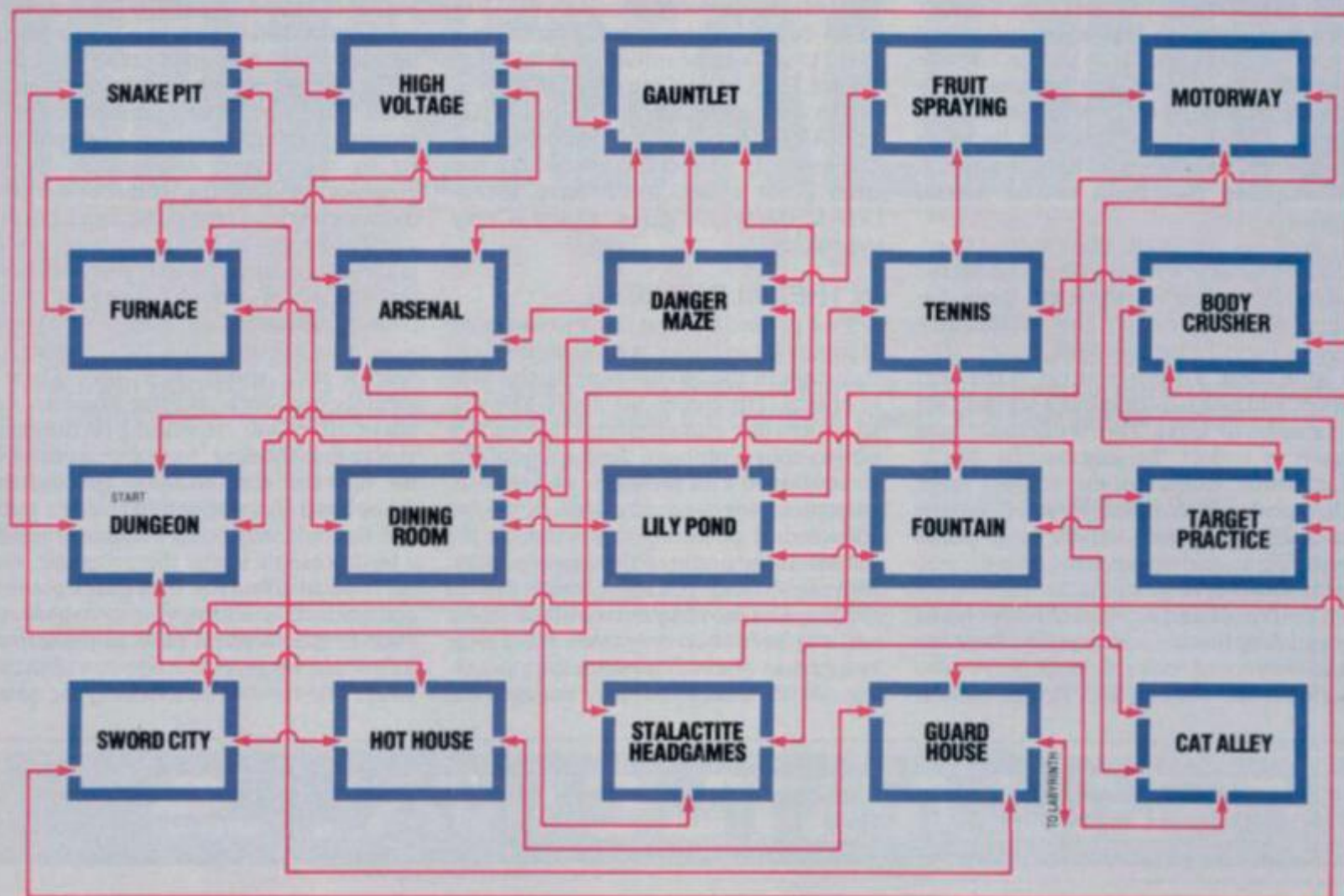
If you're killed you turn into a ghost, a condition that allows you to explore to your heart's content (and in the knowledge that no further harm can come to you). The trouble is, touching the gems

INSIDE THE CASTLE WALLS

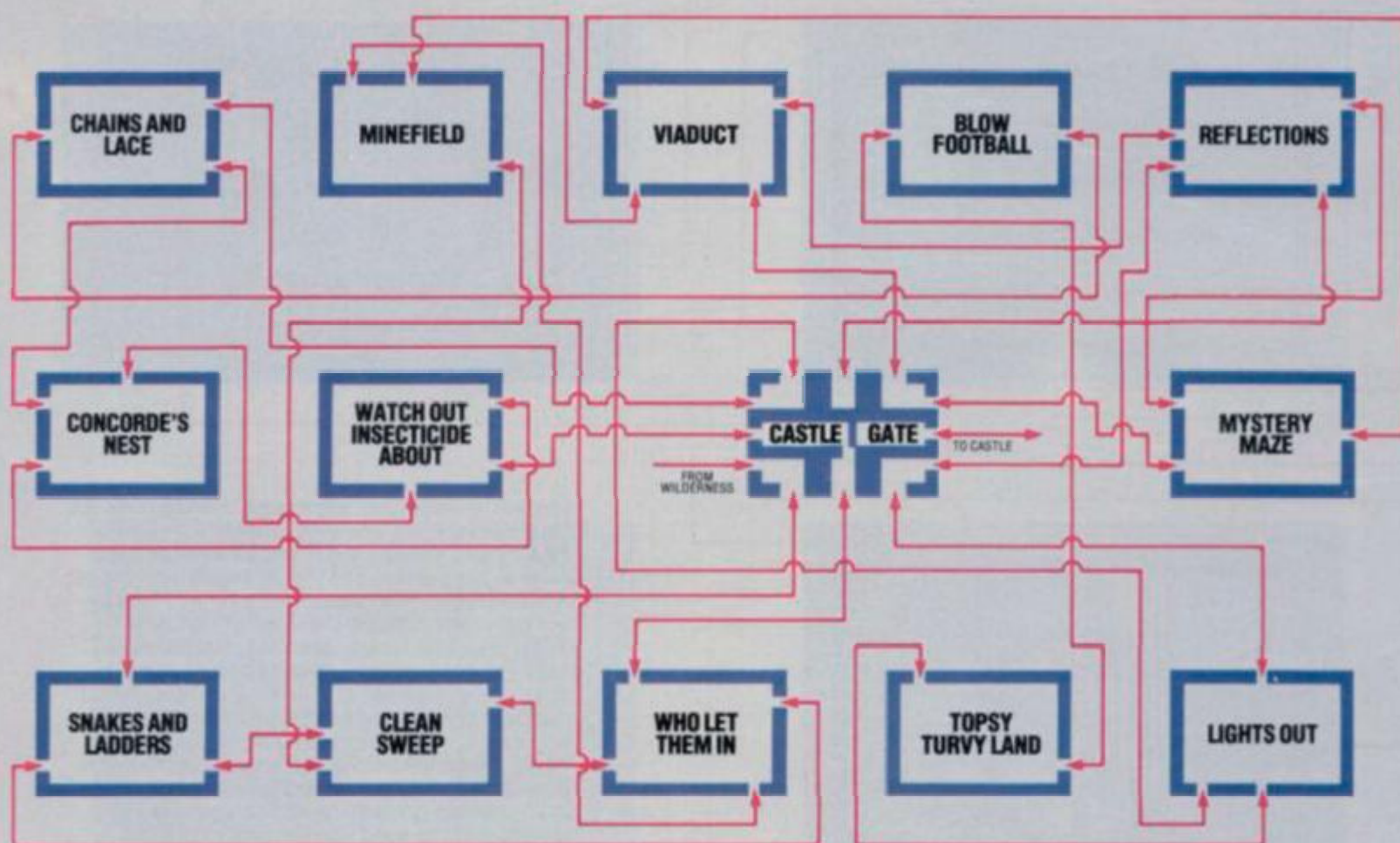


Once you've battled your way through The Wilderness and The Magic Labyrinth, you'll find your way across the drawbridge is no longer barred and, throwing caution to the wind, you can now enter The Castle, gird loins, and get eyeball to eyeball with Rapscaillon the Rogue. There are four main interconnecting rooms within The Castle: Battlements, Bedchamber, Banqueting Hall and Library. And if you get fed up with wandering through doors, try going through a window or the like — you'll find yourself spirited (sic) away into another room; in fact, this is the only way you can get to three particular locations on this level — Castle Cellar, Mouse House and Secret Passages. Zipping through the rooms using this high-speed system, you'll soon find your way around. The accompanying illustration shows some possible routes through the castle's rooms — just keep moving and you're bound to end up in the right place eventually! Actually you may not find it quite that simple — even with the help of our map; to our shame, we've still to see the freehold deeds to the crumblin' ole pile! See how you get on ...

THE FIRST DOMAIN — THE WILDERNESS



THE SECOND DOMAIN — THE MAGIC LABYRINTH



JANET BARRANCE

As you may have gleaned from the above maps, the sequence of room positions is hardly what you would call logical ... in fact, it's all a bit of an elephant's ear. The best way to familiarise yourself with your surroundings is, once you've fallen foul of one of the baddies, to have a wander round in your ethereal form; remember where you left your body though — you'll need it to continue the adventure. In the first level — The Wilderness — your task is to unearth the pixies and then touch them; they provide extra lives as well as the power to make visible the key to The Magic Labyrinth. Once that key is found, you can make your way into it and start searching for the three wizards; again, the best approach is to scout out the path ahead as a ghost.



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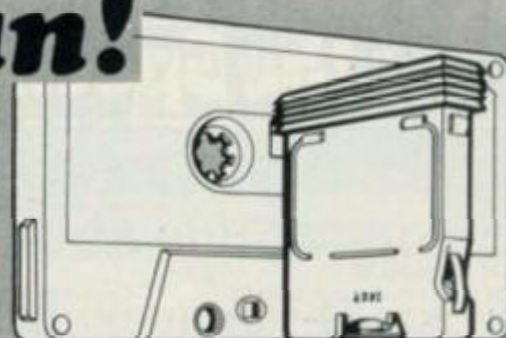
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RAPSCALLION RAP

or pixies will do you no good at all. To continue with the game proper, you just have to return to your physical form, via a press of the 'transform' key.

WHERE TO NOW?

Two things struck me in particular. First is the annoying, illogical way you leap from room to room. In The Wilderness sector there are 20 rooms to move through, each with a number of exits. But leaving (for example) the top left of one doesn't mean you'll appear in the top right of the room that should theoretically be next to it. You could appear on the bottom right of the room below it! These jumps from room to room are always the same, so mapping can be done (*Thank goodness, Ed*); it's just difficult to do graphically. The best approach is probably to make a list of rooms, their exits and where they lead to.

Then there's the humour... well, I suppose it has a 'silly' appeal. If you liked the idea of chomping toilets in *Manic Miner* then I'm sure elements of *Rapscallion* will go down well. One of my favourites is the Concorde's nest, showing two baby Concorde planes hatching from eggs and then growing in size as they zig-zag up the screen; then there are rooms where you

find yourself in a game of blow football, or snakes and ladders.

Fast reactions and good co-ordination are not exactly *de rigueur* here, but that said you can't allow yourself to relax completely. Losing lives early on in the game must be avoided because some transformations between characters are unavoidable and it's very annoying to find further progress blocked for want of a couple more. You can, however, gain extra lives by finding and touching one of the pixies; the trouble is he won't always be in the same room. In fact, there are 16 different layouts for the gems and pixies, which supposedly mean 16 different adventures. In practice, though, the variation didn't seem to make much difference; as long as you seek out all the pixies on each level, there's no reason why you shouldn't progress fairly easily.

MOVING ON...

Collect your key in The Wilderness and you'll gain instant access to The Magic Labyrinth — where your quest is to gain the power of the Magic Eye. Get that and you'll make three wizards visible, ticklish gents who have to be approached while resting. The rooms in this sector are more difficult to negotiate but there are fewer in number (just 14). Only when all three wizards have been enlisted to your cause can you enter The Castle.

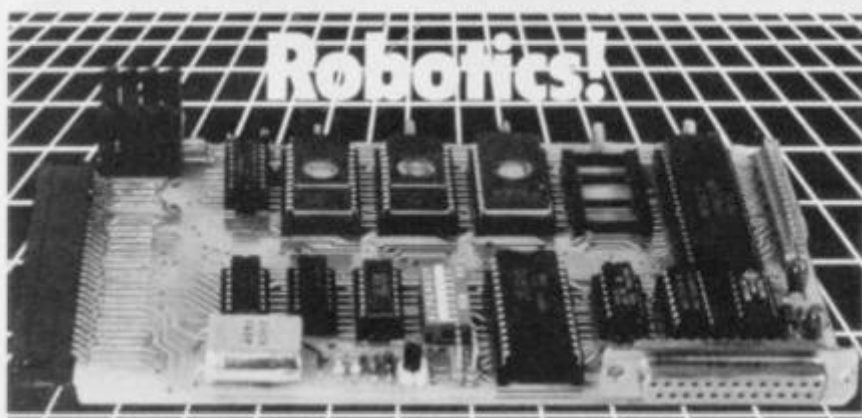
That's when things really get confusing. Not only does each of the seven rooms have a number of standard exits, there are also secret passages which lead

to different parts of the other rooms, many of which are partitioned off into small and restricting areas. And to make life even tougher, Rapscallion the Rogue has a habit of appearing in some rooms, should you hang around too long. He doesn't directly attack you — after all, why should he care if a bird or fly is roaming around his castle? Anyway, things like that definitely make the going tough once you start investigating The Castle itself.

The object you're after here is a Magic Wand and to help, first you'll need to dig out two genies. That may seem difficult as you jump randomly through the passages, but try taking it systematically and you'll soon learn the routes needed. Once you've gained the Magic Wand, all you have to do is find Rapscallion the Rogue and touch him. Do that and (assuming you didn't LOAD a SAVED game) you'll have the freehold of your castle back and be restored to the throne. As permanent proof of your wondrous achievements, you can enter your name on the title deeds and SAVE it off as a SCREENS.

SO WHAT?

Rapscallion may not have the wonderful graphics routines of so many of its contemporaries, but it's still fun to play. I managed to finish it after a few goes, so I'm not sure that true hardened games players will find it durable. On the other hand, it does have qualities which make it worth more than a passing glance. **Vs**



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machine cannot be 'hung-up' and a number of routines and FORTH words are Vectors allowing reconfiguration.

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84

48k ZX Spectrum

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JOYSTICK JURY

Your Spectrum is on the lookout for clubs to take part in Joystick Jury. Interested??? Just drop a line to Ron Smith, Joystick Jury, Your Spectrum, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.

This month's joystick jurors are all members of the Stevenage Computer Club, 106 Mobbsbury Way, Stevenage, Herts. They are: Ian Hemmingway, Phil Morse, Frank Pelling, Owen Pugh and Monty Trent.

The club was formed about 18 months ago and currently has a membership of about 45, with members' ages ranging from eight to 70 years. It meets twice a month — at the Stevenage Library and the Leisure Centre. Membership costs £6 per year... half price for children and OAPs. For more details, phone Frank Pelling on 0438 353659 (evenings and weekends).



BULLSEYE

Mastertronic/£1.99

The five darts games on this tape comprise 501, Cricket, Round the Board and Noughts and Crosses, all of which can be played on any one of four difficulty levels.

Monty The graphics are below average and the colour is only a little better. But the speed is what really lets this game down; the whole thing is written in Basic. It also has a tendency to 'crash' unaccountably.

Frank This will probably appeal to older gamers, but might be a bit tedious for youngsters. Graphics, speed and colour are all fairly average and the absence of a crowd-roar for a high score is disappointing.

Ian Darts is a difficult game to transfer on to a computer, and is probably a bad idea anyway. But this could have been improved by a speeding-up and better use of colour.

MISS

HIT

MISS



METAGALACTIC LLAMAS

Salamander Software/£6.95

Mutants descend from webs that break when bombarded with well-aimed spit. The creatures then drop to the surface and mutate into Weeviloids.

Frank Both colour and graphics are fairly pleasing, if not spectacular, and the speed seems to match the action quite well. It's easy on the eyes and fingers, but not particularly addictive.

Phil The distracted Llama and the ricocheting spit are both quite novel, and graphically very good. There are different speeds for spiders, Weeviloids and the Llama, all of which are adequate.

Ian Everything in this game looks good — well-defined graphics, fast speed, excellent choice of colour and pleasant sound. The only problem is it requires almost no effort to succeed.

MISS

MISS

HIT



PSI-SPY

Postern/£7.95

In the labyrinth of the wandering planet, there is great wealth and adventure for anyone willing to challenge the active guardians. Collect the five keys of Zar, for without them, exit is impossible.

Ian Excellent graphics with some very fine detail — all made even better by the choice of some vivid colours. It can even be bewildering until you've worked out what's going on.

Phil It looks good, and probably sounds good (it supports the Currah MicroSpeech unit), but it does appear to be needlessly complicated. After a dozen attempts, it's still not really clear what you should be doing.

Frank A photographic mind would be an advantage for memorising all the instructions in this over-complicated game; even so, once understood, it's enjoyable.

HIT

MISS

HIT

JOYSTICK JURY



THE FALL OF ROME

ASP/£6.99

Take command of Rome and help it to survive while the Eastern Empires are causing trouble. You have the resources of the entire Empire at your disposal; used wisely, they might just stop civilisation being swept away by the warring tribes.

Frank Attempting to quell the fall of Rome can really be quite addictive — providing you don't expect too much razmatazz-type action. A few battle scenes

HIT

Ian This is a good idea for a strategy game, even though the graphics aren't exactly spectacular. The map is drawn well and the result is an

HIT

acceptable screen display.

Phil The inputting of all the variables is very tedious — and so is waiting for the program to make its calculations. It even responds with "Please be patient..." while it's thinking.

MISS



BUFFER ADVENTURE

Buffer Micro Ltd/£5.95

You enter the Buffer Micro shop in order to discover what goes on behind the scenes. Unfortunately, it's not possible to leave until you locate your missing credit cards and the beastly staff insist on you buying your way out.

Frank It's refreshing to come across an adventure with a theme that's quite different from all the others... it's just a pity there are no graphics.

HIT

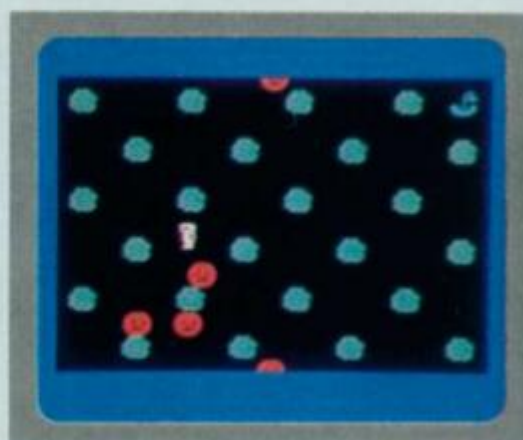
The humour is good.

Ian An adventure behind the closed doors of a well-known, south London computer shop is a very good idea and this one is particularly well executed; very playable and difficult.

HIT

Phil While the idea behind this game is fairly good, it does suffer from being text-only and the overall presentation is average. It also takes a long time to escape.

MISS



REVENGE OF THE KILLER TOMATOES

Visions/£6.95

Meanwhile, back on the vegetable patch, help the market gardener to escape from the killer tomatoes, manic mushrooms and psycho swedes.

Ian Play begins at a fairly fast speed and increases as you progress, though not to the point where the game becomes too difficult.

HIT

Frank The graphics aren't really very inspiring, and the colours are rather dull — neither of which exactly encourage you to play on. However, the game improves a little if you're using

MISS

a joystick.

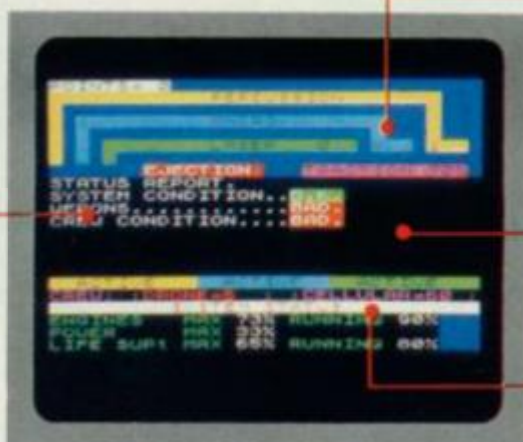
Monty Sorry, but this one's really boring and unoriginal — despite the title!

Gardening isn't much fun at the best of times, but it's made even worse here with the threat of angry vegetables coming after you. It's lasting appeal is absolutely zilch.

MISS

MISS OF THE MONTH

The status report area of the screen, detailing conditions of the ship (note the wacky spelling of 'weapons').



An amazing screen layout designed to confuse all but the most patient.

This area of the screen is designated for the mighty space battles. Hope you've stayed awake that long!

Yet another status report area — this one tells you how the ship is taking the lack of strain.

KOSMIK PIRATE

Elephant Software/£5.95

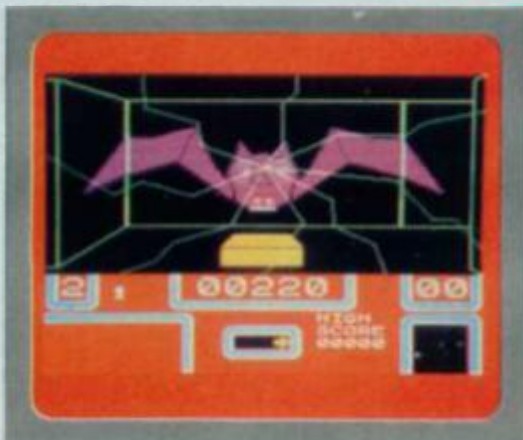
As the captain of space craft Red Beard 2, you begin a reign of terror in the outer orbits of Earth. Decisions are made via the on-board computer — because, unfortunately, RB2 is out of date and doesn't possess the obligatory 'chase' feature, found in all modern craft.

Ian It's a game that tries to incorporate graphics action with information from the on-board computer. Unfortunately, the graphics are more like those to be found in ZX81 programs, and the text is often unreadable — because of the poor choice of colours. Playability is virtually non-existent, and it won't keep anyone sitting

at their machines for long.

Frank The most exciting features of this game are the blue and yellow lines that squiggle over the screen as the program is loading. The graphics are unclear and ill-defined, while the colours blend so well that it's not always possible to read the displayed information; the sound just makes matters still worse.

Owen The game is quite fast, and responds quickly to your commands; it's just a pity it doesn't include a self destruct button! There's almost no sound, which means that it can't irritate you too much; unfortunately, the graphics are aggravating and distinguishing between items of printed information is virtually impossible.



3D BAT ATTACK

Cheetah Soft/£6.95

Trapped inside a 3D maze, trying to gather up gold blocks, your task is to fight your way along to the next level.

Frank Oh, no, not another maze game! The 3D representation of the walls is OK, and so are the bats. Use of colour is adequate, which gives quite reasonable clarity. But it's still just another

MISS

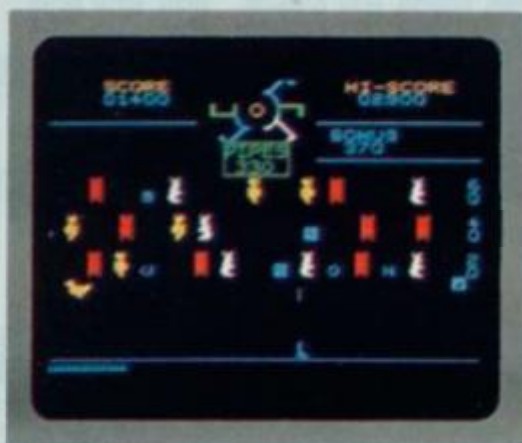
unoriginal program. **Phil** This game (or one very like it) first appeared as a listing in a certain magazine under the title of *3D Dracman*. It was OK for free, but as a commercial product, it's awful. Graphics, colour

MISS

and speed are all uninspiring. **Ian** Players can choose their own degree of difficulty by entering on different levels, with a greater or lesser number of bats. Both the graphics and the colour are above average, making for a very playable game.

HIT

JOYSTICK JURY



CARNIVAL

Eclipse Software/£5.95

This is a good old shooting gallery game where your job is to clear all the targets from the first round, then shoot the prowling bears before moving on.

Owen The sound sets the right mood for a stint in the shooting gallery, and the graphics spur you on even more. The problem is the game is easy, and soon gets boring.

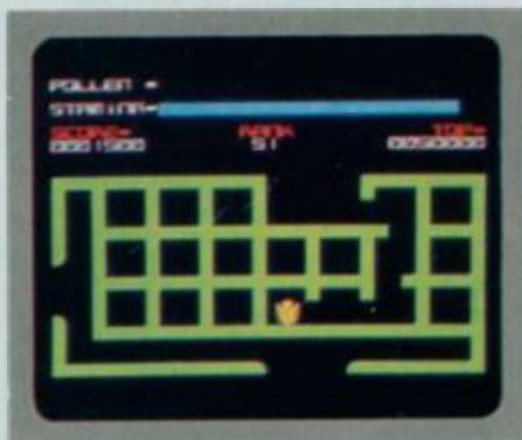
Ian The graphics are average and not too exciting, and much the same can be said for the use of colour. The six available speeds help things along a bit, and it's probably very suitable for young children.

Frank While it might be ideal for computer games novices, it's still just another version of an arcade shooting gallery program. Most disappointing of all is the distinctly unimaginative use of colour.

MISS

HIT

MISS



ANTICS

Bug-Byte/£5.95

Boris Bee has been captured by the vicious ants and is being held captive somewhere in their nest. Luckily, help is at hand in the shape of cousin Barnabee.

Frank The idea's quite good, but it's not clear why a bee should be found in an ants' nest. Nevertheless, realistic use of colour, high-standard graphics and a comfortably slow playing speed make playing enjoyable.

Ian A very addictive game that'll give hours of amusement, even though there are many similar programs on the market. A lot of thought has gone into the graphics.

Phil Barnabee buzzes sedately around, while the ants and bugs tramp after him. The 'nibbling' sound effects are rather nice and it's well worth buying if only for the superb demonstration of the sound capabilities.

MISS

HIT

HIT

HIT OF THE MONTH

The outer buildings of the Betula 5 installation. A total of 10 screens make up this circular space station.

The main screen report area, which tells you of attacks from the enemy spaceships.



The airlock tunnel in which saboteurs have to be chased by your droids.

This is the view from the pursuit droid as it rushes down the tunnel chasing a saboteur.

PSYTRON

Beyond Software/£7.95

The player eventually becomes the Psytron — something less than human and more than a computer — and is put in charge of the Betula 5 installation. Your job is to cope with the defensive demands when the attack comes. The overall aim is to process the information (and highly detailed it is) supplied in the 20-page booklet accompanying the program.

Ian The graphics are excellent, with instant access to the ten views around your base, all of which detail the surrounding buildings and landscapes. And a near perfect use of colour goes even further towards making the overall display startlingly clear. Each year a program

comes along that sets the standard by which the others must be judged. *Psytron* is 1984's yardstick.

Frank The idea is simply splendid, and there's so much going on it's impossible to get bored. With its well-defined, clear and colourful graphics, and a manageable but challenging speed, the game is addictive from the very start, and gets more so as the player progresses.

Phil There are six levels to the game, but it'll take a great deal of practice to get there — especially as the speed is very fast. However, there's not a lot of sound used, but this goes unnoticed alongside the superb graphics. Overall, it's one of the most interesting games to come on to the market.



MILLIONAIRE

Incentive Software/£5.95

Having just written what you consider to be a commercially viable program, your job now is to try and sell it. With just £500 of your own, the ultimate aim is to achieve millionaire status.

Frank Since 95 per cent of this game is question and answer; the graphics aren't really important — even so, they look good. For me, there's nothing like testing your ability to succeed in business.

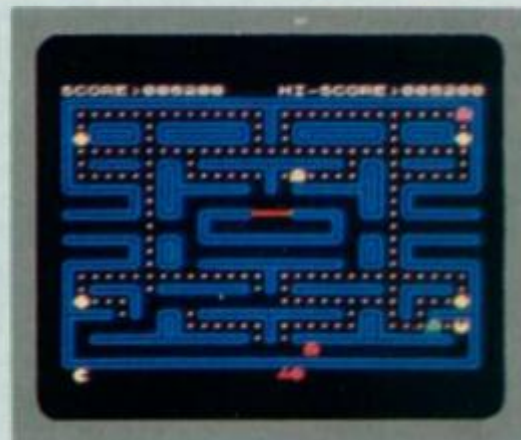
Ian There are many games of this type on the market, but wheeling and dealing in an effort to make a million is great fun — especially with characters like 'Honest Harry'.

Phil While it's fun to play, the lack of originality is a big problem. And I found the virtual absence of graphics and sound tended to make playing just a little tedious.

HIT

HIT

MISS



PAC-MAN

Atarisoft/£9.95

The Pac-man, as usual, scores points by eating all the dots in the maze while avoiding the pursuing ghosts. There are four flashing power pills, located one in each corner of the screen.

Owen It's totally unoriginal, but that doesn't make a bit of difference to the playability. The speed increases as you progress and the colour is just right.

Ian Atari has Spectrumised its old favourite — it's just as good as the original and is not likely to be equalled. It's also nice that all the sound effects have been included.

Frank Technically, it's as good as most other *Pacman* type games, and no doubt some people will go for it. However, there must be better similar games now available, even though the speed gets quite challenging.

HIT

HIT

MISS

Last month, we looked at a circuit for a Centronics parallel interface for the ZX Spectrum. So, assuming all you out there have now constructed perfect working units, the time has come for us to go through the software that's required to drive it.

SAFETY FIRST

The main problem with having a piece of driver software resident in RAM is that sometimes it can interfere with another piece of code, preventing you from printing anything while it's loaded. To overcome this, I've made our driver software self-relocating — that is, it'll move itself to a safe area after loading. To achieve that happy end, the code is first loaded into a work area, at address 26000. (This is outside the area required for Microdrives, and will not need changing if you intend putting the software on that medium.)

Let's take a more detailed look at the software. The first program you'll come up against is the Basic loader program, which also does a little housekeeping.

```
10 LOAD "" CODE 26000
20 LET k = USR 26000
30 CLEAR k
40 PRINT "Code loaded. To turn off token
printing" "POKE any number except 0 into
23296" "To turn the facility off,"
"POKE 23296,0"
```

The short Basic loader program; this should be typed in first of all and **SAVED**.

The function of line 10 is obviously to load the driver code into the workspace and line 20 passes control to the machine code routine at 26000. It's a function of the Spectrum operating system that the content of the Z80 BC register pair is returned to Basic when exiting from a USR subroutine; thus LET k = USR 26000 means that, on exiting from the code that begins at address 26000, the BC register pair contents will be put into the variable k. The monitor at 26000 ensures that at exit time, BC holds an address below the driver software, so that line 30 can use the CLEAR command and reset RAMTOP to the new position. Resetting RAMTOP below the driver software offers protection against it being overwritten.

STEP BY STEP

Let's take a look now at the listing of the driver code. The left-hand side contains only line numbers and these should not be mistaken for addresses or op-codes. If you have an assembler, then you can type in the listing as it stands; if not, you'll have to use the data block and a sophisticated Hex loader — which I'll provide you with later.

Looking first at the monitor part of the listing (lines 0000-0110), here we take the current Basic stack pointer and save a copy in HL. Next, 80 is subtracted from it to give a safe address for us to work — that is, for stack workspace. This address is where the end of the driver software will be, after relocation. So, where will the start be? Well, that's calculated by lines 0120-0150. Line 0120 loads DE with the length of the driver code, and if

SOFTENING UP THE HARDWARE

Once you've built the DIY Centronics interface from last month's issue, you're ready for John Flenley's software to get you into print; and here it is...

we subtract that length from the address of the end of the code, we get the address of the start of the code — which is saved at a location labelled NSTART. Simple, eh?

Progressing to lines 0160-0190, here is where we calculate the difference between where we are and where we will be — storing it at a location labelled DELTA. Line 0200 loads HL with the base address of the channel information; the channel information contains addresses of the input and output routines associated with that channel. For our application, we want to divert Channel 3, the printer channel. Each entry in the channel table is five bytes long, and therefore the beginning of the Channel 3 entry will occur 15 bytes after the start of the table.

CALL and table addresses must be altered to reflect their new position after relocation. Lines 0210-0350 do this, using the difference in addresses already calculated (DELTA). This routine of four instructions will be repeated for the other three alterations required, at labels CC2+1, CC3+1 and CC4+1 (see lines 0450-0480). This is where the actual move takes place, using the block move command LDIR.

Look now at lines 0490-0540. The BC register pair is set up for its return to Basic. This is to ensure it contains the new address to which RAMTOP must be set — in order to protect the code that's just been moved. The flag byte TOKEN is cleared so that token printing occurs initially and then the return to Basic is effected.

The above routine has reset the channel information so that it can tell the Spectrum operating system that, when it wants to output a character to the printer, it should pass that character to our routine, and not now the ZX Printer routines. The operating system will enter our routine with the ASCII code of the character to be printed, in the accumulator A.

TALKING FORMATS

Before going on with the listing, it's perhaps prudent to discuss the format of a Spectrum Basic line. The Basic keywords stored are not in their full ASCII form (for example, GO SUB is not stored as the five ASCII characters 'G', 'O', 'S', 'U' and 'B', but as a single byte 'TOKEN', whose values are in the range 165 to 255). If we are to print these cor-

rectly, then we must intercept all bytes in that range and decode them into their full ASCII form. Hang on though... if we want to send graphic data to the printer, then we need to send bytes in that range that do *not* need decoding. To overcome this problem, the driver routine has a 'flag byte' labelled TOKEN. This is resident at location 23296 in the now defunct ZX Printer buffer, and is normally set to zero — which ensures that tokens are decoded correctly. If you wish to send data bytes to the printer, and *don't* want them decoded, then you must first POKE 23296 with any value other than zero, and token printing will be disabled.

```
00000      ORG 26000
00010      ;
00020      NSTART      EQU 23298
00030      DELTA        EQU 23300
00040      TOKEN        EQU 23296
00050      STACK        EQU 23303
00060      ;
00070      START      LD (STACK),SP
00080                  LD HL,(STACK)
00090                  LD DE,80
00100                  AND A
00110                  SBC HL,DE
00120                  LD DE,CEND-PRTRTN
00130                  AND A
00140                  SBC HL,DE
00150                  LD (NSTART),HL
00160                  LD DE,PRTRTN
00170                  AND A
00180                  SBC HL,DE
00190                  LD (DELTA),HL
00200                  LD HL,(MSC4F)
00210                  LD DE,15
00220                  ADD HL,DE
00230                  PUSH HL
00240                  LD HL,(DELTA)
00250                  LD DE,PRTRTN
00260                  ADD HL,DE
00270                  EX DE,HL
00280                  POP HL
00290                  LD (HL),E
00300                  INC HL
00310                  LD (HL),D
00320                  LD DE,(DELTA)
00330                  LD HL,(CC1+1)
00340                  ADD HL,DE
00350                  LD (CC1+1),HL
00360                  LD HL,(CC2+1)
00370                  ADD HL,DE
00380                  LD (CC2+1),HL
00390                  LD HL,(CC3+1)
00400                  ADD HL,DE
00410                  LD (CC3+1),HL
00420                  LD HL,(CC4+1)
00430                  ADD HL,DE
00440                  LD (CC4+1),HL
00450                  LD HL,PRTRTN
00460                  LD DE,(NSTART)
00470                  LD BC,CEND-PRTRTN
00480                  LDIR
00490                  LD BC,(NSTART)
00500                  DEC BC
00510                  DEC BC
00520                  XOR A
```




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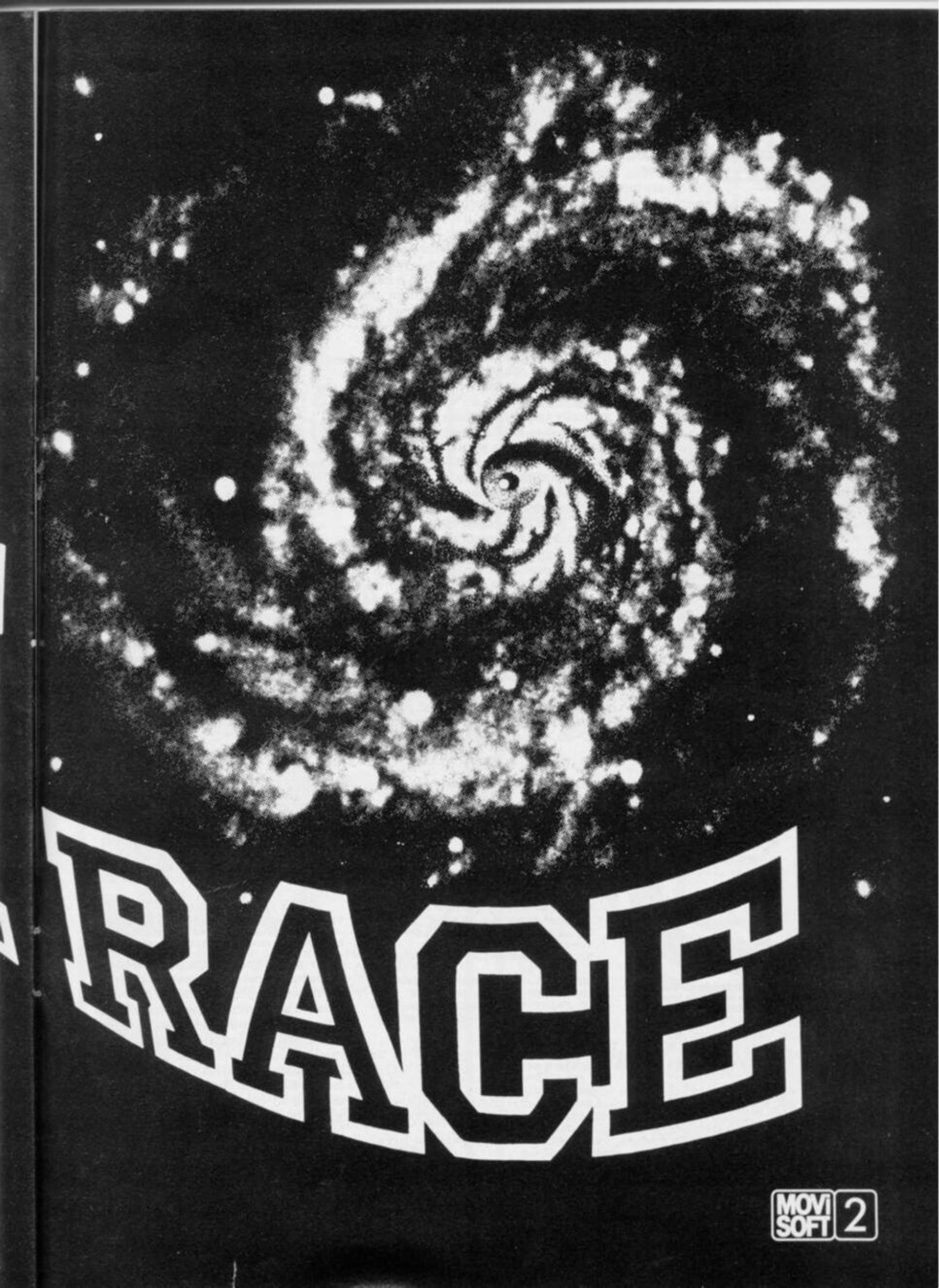
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SOFTENING UP THE HARDWARE

```
00530 LD (TOKEN),A
00540 RET
```

The code of the next character to be printed is sent to the following part of the program via the accumulator.

```
00650 PRTRTN CP 32
00660 JR NC,PRR1
00670 CP 13
00680 JR Z,PRT
00690 LD B,A
00700 LD A,(TOKEN)
00710 OR A
00720 RET Z
00730 LD A,B
00740 PRR1 CP 165
00750 JR C,PRT
00760 LD B,A
00770 LD A,(TOKEN)
00780 OR A
00790 LD A,B
00800 JR NZ,PRT
00810 SUB 165
00820 LD H,0
00830 LD L,A
00840 ADD HL,HL
00850 CC1 LD DE,OFFTAB
00860 ADD HL,DE
00870 LD E,(HL)
00880 INC HL
00890 LD D,(HL)
00900 LD HL,150
00910 ADD HL,DE
00920 LD A,32
00930 CC2 CALL PRT
00940 P1 LD A,(HL)
00950 BIT 7,A
00960 JR NZ,LAST
00970 CC3 CALL PRT
00980 INC HL
00990 JR P1
01000 LAST RES 7,A
01010 CC4 CALL PRT
01020 LD A,32
01030 PRT PUSH AF
01040 DTR IN A,(223)
01050 BIT 4,A
01060 JR Z,P11
01070 CALL BREAK
01080 JR DTR
01090 P11 POP AF
01100 OUT (223),A
01110 RET
01120 BREAK LD A,#7F
01130 IN A,(#FE)
01140 RRA
01150 RET C
01160 LD A,#FE
01170 IN A,(#FE)
01180 RRA
01190 RET C
01200 LD HL,10000
01210 LP DEC HL
01220 LD A,H
01230 OR L
01240 JR NZ,LP
01250 LD A,13
01260 OUT (223),A
01270 RST 8
01280 DEFB 12
```

The table of offset values holds all the vital information the program needs to break down keywords into ASCII equivalents.

```
01380 OFFTAB DEFW 0,3,9,11,13,18
01390 DEFW 25,29,31,34,38,42,45
01400 DEFW 48,51,54,57,60,63,66
01410 DEFW 68,71,74,77,80,83,87
01420 DEFW 89,92,96,100,103,106
01430 DEFW 108,111,113,115,117
01440 DEFW 121,125,127,131,137
01450 DEFW 140,146,150,155,161
01460 DEFW 168,173,179,183,189
01470 DEFW 192,197,202,208,215
01480 DEFW 219,222,228,233,237
01490 DEFW 241,245,252,255,261
01500 DEFW 269,272,275,278,283
01510 DEFW 289,294,298,302,305
01520 DEFW 310,314,318,323,327
01530 DEFW 330,334,343,345,348
01540 DEFW 352,357,363
01550 CEND DEFB 0
```

As well as token bytes, a Basic line can also contain bytes in the range zero to 31. These are used to convey information to the Spectrum PRINT routine about the colour of the line, and various other things besides. These characters are not standard ASCII and will do silly things to your printer, unless you filter them out. The only code that you want in this range is 13, (Carriage Return). The TOKEN flag is again used. If it's zero, then all codes under 32 (except 13) are discarded; if it's not zero, then the bytes are passed through to the printer.

When the routine decides that it has a token, it first subtracts 165 from the value — which means that tokens will have values in the range zero to 90. To save space, I've used the token table in ROM, which contains the full ASCII version of each token. However, as each token (when expanded) is not of equal length, then there's no way of mathematically calculating where the first byte of any token is. To overcome this, the driver routine uses what's known as an offset table — which contains a two-byte entry for each token value. The entry consists of a number that, when added to the base address of the token table in ROM, gives the address of the first byte of the full ASCII form of that token. One further point about the table in ROM — the last character of the token is flagged by having bit seven turned on; the routine must check for this when reading from the table.

TIME FOR A BREAK

Returning to the assembly listing, note that in the BREAK routine, if a break is detected we try to send a Carriage Return character to the printer. (A lot of printers require a CR character to be sent, to initiate the printing of the

```
1 BORDER 1: PAPER 1: INK 7: C
LS
5 POKE 23609,50: REM keyboard
bleep
10 POKE 23658,8: REM ensure ca
pita letters
15 FOR i=30000 TO 30392 STEP 8
: LET addr=i
16 LET c=0: FOR x=1 TO 8
20 GO SUB 100
50 LET num=hi+lo: POKE addr,num
55 PRINT i$;" ";: LET c=c+num:
LET addr=addr+1: NEXT x
56 LET j=INT (c/256): LET c=IN
T (c-(j*256)): GO SUB 100
57 LET num=hi+lo: IF c<>num TH
EN GO TO 60
58 PRINT "OK": NEXT i: SAVE "C
ENCODE"CODE 30000,400: STOP
60 PRINT "HASH CHECK - Re-ente
r line": LET addr=addr-8: GO TO
16
100 INPUT i$
110 IF LEN i$<>2 THEN GO TO 20
120 IF i$(1)<"0" OR i$(1)>"9" A
ND (i$(1)<"A" OR i$(1)>"F") THEN
GO TO 20
130 IF i$(2)<"0" OR i$(2)>"9" A
ND (i$(2)<"A" OR i$(2)>"F") THEN
GO TO 20
140 LET n=1: LET hi=16*FN h(i$,
n)
150 LET n=2: LET lo=FN h(i$,n)
160 RETURN
1000 DEF FN h(i$,n)=CODE i$(n)-4
8-7*(CODE i$(n)>57)
```

The Hex loader program — included for those not blessed with an assembler.

printer's internal buffer. If it wasn't, then after BREAKing we could be left with a buffer full of data in the printer.) The delay loop is present to give the printer time to return to its 'NOT BUSY' status, and thus be able to receive the byte. Without the loop, we are unable to check the printer status by reading in from the port and waiting for the BUSY line to go low; after all, there's always the possibility that something dreadful has happened to it (that is, you've switched it off) in which case, BUSY will never go low, and your program will never return to Basic.

```
ED 73 07 5B 2A 07 5B 11 5F
50 00 A7 ED 52 11 23 01 6B
A7 ED 52 22 02 5B 11 FA 70
65 A7 ED 52 22 04 5B 2A F6
4F 5C 11 0F 00 19 E5 2A F3
04 5B 11 FA 65 19 EB E1 B4
73 23 72 ED 5B 04 5B 2A D9
1C 66 19 22 1C 66 2A 29 92
66 19 22 29 66 2A 31 66 F1
19 22 31 66 2A 39 66 19 B4
22 39 66 21 FA 65 ED 5B B9
02 5B 01 23 01 ED B0 ED 0C
4B 02 5B 0B 0B AF 32 00 9F
5B C9 FE 20 30 0B FE 0D 8B
28 3B 47 3A 00 5B B7 CB BE
7B FE A5 3B 30 47 3A 00 04
5B B7 7B 20 2B D6 A5 26 73
00 6F 29 11 67 66 19 5E ED
23 56 21 96 00 19 3E 20 A7
CD 3D 66 7E CB 7F 20 06 5E
CD 3D 66 23 18 F5 CB BF 2A
CD 3D 66 3E 20 F5 DB DF 7D
CB 67 2B 05 CD 4D 66 1B F7
F5 F1 D3 DF C9 3E 7F DB F9
FE 1F DB 3E FE DB FE 1F 29
DB 21 10 27 2B 7C B5 20 AC
FB 3E 0D D3 DF CF 0C 00 D3
00 03 00 09 00 0B 00 0D 24
00 12 00 19 00 1D 00 1F 67
00 22 00 26 00 2A 00 2D 9F
00 30 00 33 00 36 00 39 D2
00 3C 00 3F 00 42 00 44 01
00 47 00 4A 00 4D 00 50 2E
00 53 00 57 00 59 00 5C 5F
00 60 00 64 00 67 00 6A 95
00 6C 00 6F 00 71 00 73 BF
00 75 00 79 00 7D 00 7F EA
00 83 00 89 00 8C 00 92 2A
00 96 00 9B 00 A1 00 AB 7A
00 AD 00 B3 00 B7 00 BD D4
00 C0 00 C5 00 CA 00 D0 1F
00 D7 00 DB 00 DE 00 E4 74
00 E9 00 ED 00 F1 00 F5 BC
00 FC 00 FF 00 05 01 0D 0E
01 10 01 13 01 16 01 1B 5B
01 21 01 26 01 2A 01 2E A3
01 31 01 36 01 3A 01 3E E3
01 43 01 47 01 4A 01 4E 26
01 57 01 59 01 5C 01 60 70
01 65 01 6B 01 00 00 00 D3
```

The Hex dump of the Centronics software — type this in using the Hex loader; the last byte of each row is a checksum value.

To create this software, you'll need the Basic loader program mentioned earlier in this piece — plus the block of code provided. Those with an assembler will find no problem creating the block; however, those who feel insecure at the sight of machine code should type in the Basic loader program and SAVE it — then type in and RUN the Hex loader given. It'll ask you to enter the code block and, when finished, it'll save the finished block at address 30000. It should, of course, go at location 26000, and the Basic loader LOADs that by LOADING it at that address.

When you wish to make use of your Centronics interface, just type in LOAD "name" and all the relevant code will be loaded. Happy printing! 

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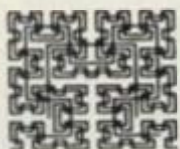
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BASIC AT A STRETCH

Tired of using the same old commands? Well, saddle up your Interface 1 unit and let Gavin Smyth demonstrate the practice of adding up to 26 new commands to your Spectrum.

Sinclair Basic, for all its slowness, is fairly comprehensive. But as with all things, the more you have, the more you want and a few extra commands might certainly come in useful. How about, for instance, an absolute draw. With Interface 1 attached, it's possible to add as many extra commands as you like.

First, let's look at the extended interpreter and the individual routines in detail.

NEW INTERPRETATIONS

When a line of Basic is entered, the original ROM checks its syntax; if it fails to recognise the command, it passes control over to the Interface 1 ROM. This scans

the line checking for new words such as 'FORMAT'. If this test also fails, the processor jumps to the error handling routine (at ERR6) via the vectored address at 23735. You can alter this address and have further tests implemented to provide extra commands.

This is what the extended interpreter does. It checks for the presence of an asterisk at the beginning of a statement followed by a letter; with this simple test, however, only 26 new commands can be invented. If it finds no asterisk or letter it gives the usual syntax error. If all is correct, it jumps to the actual routine via the table of vectors. Note that unimplemented commands point to the error

handler. The individual command routines check the rest of the syntax and contain the runtime routine.

For the interpreter to function properly, there must be at least one space between the new command word and any following arguments. The command word must start with an asterisk and a letter, followed by any (or no) characters at all.

ABSOLUTE DRAW

The first new command is:

***DRAW x,y**

Which draws to the point (x,y). It's much simpler to use than relative co-ordinates (especially in graphs). Thus:

PLOT 100,100: DRAW 20,30

Is equivalent to:

PLOT 100,100: *DRAW 120,130

First, the routine calls SPACE to get to the end of the first word (in this case, *DRAW). Then it checks for the presence of two numeric arguments separated by a comma; if there's something wrong it jumps to the error handler. In syntax time — that is, when the line is first entered into a program — the routine ends here; in runtime the rest is executed. This part simply calculates the size of the relative co-ordinates and calls the Basic ROM's DRAW subroutine.

When this subroutine is being executed, the Interface 1 ROM is paged in. This allows routines in the Interface 1's ROM, such as STEND, to be simply CALLED; routines in the main ROM, such as FNDINT1, have to be called via

```

1 REM ** EXTENDED BASIC **
2
3 REM In line 20, set start
  to the desired beginning of the
  machine code, and in line 10,
  CLEAR to the location before
4
5 REM This BASIC program will
  relocate the code anywhere in
  memory, but it is fairly slow
6
7 REM The machine code is 559
  bytes long
8
10 CLEAR 64797
20 LET start=64798
30 LET a$=""
40 FOR a=start TO start+558
50 IF a$="" THEN READ a$
60 POKE a, FN h(a$)*16+FN h(a$(
2))
70 LET a$=a$(3 TO )
80 NEXT a
99 REM Now relocate the code
100 LET a=20: LET p=45: GO SUB
500
110 LET a=53: LET p=99: GO SUB
500
120 LET a=77: LET p=165: GO SUB
500
130 LET a=83: LET p=267: GO SUB
500
140 LET a=97: LET p=465: GO SUB
500
150 LET a=100: LET p=31: GO SUB
500
160 LET a=166: LET p=31: GO SUB
500
170 LET a=268: LET p=31: GO SUB
500
180 LET a=463: LET p=394: GO SU

```

```

B 500
190 LET a=466: LET p=31: GO SUB
500
200 PRINT "To use the extra com
  mands, enter"
210 PRINT "POKE 23735,":start-
256*INT (start/256):": POKE 2373
6,":INT (start/256)
220 STOP
499 REM This routine sorts out
  the absolute addresses to
  relocate the program
500 LET address=start+a+1
510 LET pointsto=start+p
520 POKE address,INT (pointsto/
256)
530 POKE address-1,pointsto-256
*PEEK address
540 RETURN
899 REM function to convert a
  hex digit to its decimal value
900 DEF FN h(a$)=CODE a$-48-7*(
a$>"A")
999 REM data for the machine
  code program
1000 DATA "D71B00FE2AC2F001D720"
1010 DATA "00E69FFE1B3801AFB721"
1020 DATA "2DD806004F095E2356EB"
1030 DATA "E9D77400FE20C8FE3ACB"
1040 DATA "FE0D20F3C9F001F001F0"
1050 DATA "01F00163DBF001F001F0"
1060 DATA "01F001F001F001F001F0"
1070 DATA "01F001F001F001A5D8F0"
1080 DATA "01F0010BD9F001F001F0"
1090 DATA "01F001F001F001D1D9CD"
1100 DATA "1FD8D7821CFE2CC2F001"
1110 DATA "D72000D7821CCDB705D7"
1120 DATA "941E217ESC9638141601"
1130 DATA "47C5D5D7941ED1C1217D"
1140 DATA "5C96380A1E011B0A16FF"

```

```

1150 DATA "ED4418EB1EFFED444FD7"
1160 DATA "BA24C3C105CD1FD8D7B2"
1170 DATA "1CFE2CC2F001D72000D7"
1180 DATA "B21CFE2CC2F001D72000"
1190 DATA "D7821CCDB705D7941ECB"
1200 DATA "27CB27CB2716005F2A7B"
1210 DATA "5C19E5D7941EF5D7941E"
1220 DATA "C14FD13E0BF5C5D7AA22"
1230 DATA "F5E5D5D74D0DD7DB0BE1"
1240 DATA "46D1EBF10E003CCB38CB"
1250 DATA "193D20F9702371C10513"
1260 DATA "F13D20D9C3C105CD1FDB"
1270 DATA "D7821CCDB705D7941EE6"
1280 DATA "03280AFE01282CFE0228"
1290 DATA "151B6C3EC0210040A706"
1300 DATA "20CB1E2310FB3D20F5C3"
1310 DATA "C1053EC021FF57A70620"
1320 DATA "CB162B10FB3D20F5C3C1"
1330 DATA "05A71100400603C53E08"
1340 DATA "083E07626B24E5012000"
1350 DATA "EDB0D13D20F3010007ED"
1360 DATA "42E5012000EDB0D1083D"
1370 DATA "20E001E00609545D0120"
1380 DATA "00ED42EBEDB0C110CC21"
1390 DATA "E0570620772310FCC3C1"
1400 DATA "0511FF570603C53E0808"
1410 DATA "3E07626B25E5012000ED"
1420 DATA "B8D13D20F301000709E5"
1430 DATA "012000EDB8D1083D20E1"
1440 DATA "01E006ED42545D012000"
1450 DATA "09EBEDB8C110CD210040"
1460 DATA "0620C38AD9CD1FD8D7B2"
1470 DATA "1CCDB705D7941EA72832"
1480 DATA "FE012B09FE02280DFD36"
1490 DATA "000AEF01B0012110001B"
1500 DATA "0601FFFE212018110400"
1510 DATA "3E10C5D5E5F5D78503F1"
1520 DATA "E1D1C1093D20F1C3C105"
1530 DATA "F33A485C0F0F0F260446"
1540 DATA "2B10FED3FEE10087CB5"
1550 DATA "2B030B1BF0FBC3C105"

```


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BASIC AT A STRETCH

This is the machine code disassembly of a series of extended Basic routines which expand Sinclair Basic by up to 26 new commands, of the form 'name', ie., commencing with an asterisk, followed by a letter (upper or lower case) or word and any necessary parameters. (Note that this program only works with Interface 1 attached, and the system variable vector at 23735 and 23736 should be set to point to START.)

```
START RST 10 GETCHAR
      CP "*"
      ;make sure 1st char is *
      JP NZ ERR6
      RST 10 NXTCHAR
      AND 9F
      CP +27
      ;check 2nd is within
      ;alphabetic range
      ;(very simple test so may
      ;fail with some chars)
      JR C INDEX
      XOR A
      INDEX ADD A,A
      LD HL, TABLE
      LD B,0
      LD C,A
      ADD HL,BC
      LD E,(HL)
      INC HL
      LD D,(HL)
      EX DE,HL
      JP (HL)
      ;jump to specific routine
      ;for each of the new 26
      ;commands
      ;subroutine to find the
      ;end of a word
SPACE RST 10 CHADD
      CP " "
      RET Z
      CP ":"
      RET Z
      CP 0D
      JR NZ SPACE
      RET
```

The table of vectors to the specific routines.

ERR6	;error vector	ERR6	;*N
ERR6	;vector for *A...	ERR6	;*O
ERR6	;*B...	PRINT	;*P
ERR6	;*C	ERR6	;*Q
DRAW	;*D	ERR6	;*R
ERR6	;*E	ERR6	;*S
ERR6	;*F	SCROL	;*T
ERR6	;*G	ERR6	;*U
ERR6	;*H	ERR6	;*V
ERR6	;*I	ERR6	;*W
ERR6	;*J	ERR6	;*X
ERR6	;*K	ERR6	;*Y
ERR6	;*L	ERR6	;*Z
ERR6	;*M	ZAP	

This routine provides the command to carry out absolute drawing. It is used in the form 'DRAW x,y (or 'd x,y), where x and y are the co-ordinates of the point to be drawn to.

```
DRAW CALL SPACE
      RST 10 EXPT1NM
      CP " "
      ;check for separator
      JP NZ ERR6
      RST 10 NXTCHAR
      RST 10 EXPT1NM
      CALL STEND
      ;now x & y are on the top
      ;of the stack
      RST 10 FNDINT1
      ;y co-ord into A
      LD HL,COORDS+1
      ;address of previous y
      SUB (HL)
      ;find relative y
      JR C DRAW2
      ;if -ve, adjust it
      LD D,1
      LD B,A
      DRAW1 PUSH BC
            PUSH DE
            RST 10 FNDINT1
            POP DE
            POP BC
            LD HL,COORDS
            SUB (HL)
            ;same for x co-ord
            JR C DRAW3
```

```
LD E,1
JR DRAW4
DRAW2 LD D,FF
      NEG
      JR DRAW1
DRAW3 LD E,FF
      NEG
DRAW4 LD C,A
      RST 10 DRAWR
      ;perform actual drawing
      JP END1
```

You can print a UDG anywhere on the screen using the routine below. You access this ability using the command 'PRINT x,y,c (or 'p x,y,c), where (x,y) is the pixel co-ordinate of the top left of the character and c is the number of the UDG (A is '0', B is '1', and so on).

```
PRINT CALL SPACE
      RST 10 EXPT1NM
      CP " "
      JP NZ ERR6
      RST 10 NXTCHAR
      RST 10 EXPT1NM
      CP " "
      JP NZ ERR6
      RST 10 NXTCHAR
      RST 10 EXPT1NM
      CALL STEND
      RST 10 FNDINT1
      SLA A
      SLA A
      SLA A
      LD D,0
      LD E,A
      LD HL,(UDG)
      ADD HL,DE
      ;HL contains the start
      ;of the required UDG data
      PUSH HL
      RST 10 FNDINT1
      PUSH AF
      RST 10 FNDINT1
      POP BC
      LD C,A
      ;BC contains the co-ords
      ;of the point to print to
      POP DE
      LD A,8
      PUSH AF
      PUSH BC
      RST 10 PIXADD
      ;convert co-ords into an
      ;address and pointer in A
      PUSH AF
      PUSH HL
      PUSH DE
      RST 10 TEMPS
      ;set up colours
      RST 10 PORTTR
      ;fill in attributes
      POP HL
      LD B,(HL)
      POP DE
      EX DE,HL
      POP AF
      LD C,0
      ;BC contains a byte of
      ;UDG data
      INC A
      PRNT2 SRL B
            RR C
            DEC A
            JR NZ PRNT2
            ;shift data along to the
            ;correct pixel within the
            ;screen byte
            LD (HL),B
            INC HL
            LD (HL),C
            ;put it on the screen
            POP BC
            DEC B
            INC DE
            ;next line
            POP AF
            DEC A
            JR NZ PRNT1
            JP END1
```

This part of the program provides a pixel scroll in any of four directions; the command is used in the form 'SCROLL n (or 's n), where n specifies direction.

```
SCROL CALL SPACE
      RST 10 EXPT1NM
      CALL STEND
      RST 10 FNDINT1
      AND 3
      ;take n mod 4
```



```

JR Z SCRL0
;scroll right
CP 1
JR Z SCRL1
;scroll up
CP 2
JR Z SCRL2
;scroll left
JR SCRLB
;scroll down
SCRL0 LD A,+192
;no of lines on screen
LD HL,+16384
;start of screen
SCRL3 AND A
;clear carry
LD B,+32
;no of bytes per line
SCRL4 RR (HL)
;shift 1 bit right
INC HL
;next byte on line
DJNZ SCRL4
DEC A
;next line
JR NZ SCRL3
JP END1
SCRL2 LD A,+192
LD HL,+22527
;end of screen
SCRL5 AND A
LD B,+32
SCRL6 RL (HL)
;shift 1 pixel left
DEC HL
DJNZ SCRL6
DEC A
JR NZ SCRL5
JP END1
SCRL1 AND A
;reset carry
LD DE,+16384
;1st byte of screen
LD B,3
;no of 'sections' to
;be scrolled
SCRL7 PUSH BC
LD A,8
;no of character lines
;per section
SCRL8 EX AF
LD A,7
;no of pixel lines per
;character - 1
SCRL9 LD H,D
LD L,E
INC H
;HL points to next pixel
;line
PUSH HL
LD BC,+32
LDIR
POP DE
DEC A
JR NZ SCRL9
LD BC,+1792
SBC HL,BC
;adjust pointer to start
;of next character line
PUSH HL
LD BC,+32
LDIR
POP DE
EX AF
DEC A
JR NZ SCRL8
LD BC,+1750
ADD HL,BC
LD D,H
LD E,L
LD BC,+32
SBC HL,BC
;adjust pointer for next
;screen section
EX DE,HL
LDIR
POP BC
DJNZ SCRL7
LD HL,+22496
LD B,+32
;now clear the last line
SCRLA LD (HL),A
;A already contains 0
INC HL
DJNZ SCRLA
JP END1
SCRLB LD DE,+22527
;last location on screen
LD B,3
SCRLC PUSH BC

```

```

LD A,8
SCRLD EX AF
LD A,7
SCRLE LD H,D
LD L,E
DEC H
PUSH HL
LD BC,+32
LDDR
POP DE
DEC A
JR NZ SCRLE
LD BC,+1792
ADD HL,BC
PUSH HL
LD BC,+32
LDDR
POP DE
EX AF
DEC A
JR NZ SCRLD
LD BC,+1750
SBC HL,BC
LD D,H
LD E,L
LD BC,+32
ADD HL,BC
EX DE,HL
LDDR
POP BC
DJNZ SCRLC
LD HL,+16384
LD B,+32
JP SCRLA
;clear top line

```

This last routine provides better sound effects. The command is used in the form 'ZAP n (or 'z n), where n specifies whether you require an explosion, a falling tone or a rising tone.

```

ZAP CALL SPACE
RST 10 EXPT1NM
CALL STEND
RST 10 FNDINT1
AND A
JR Z ZAP0
CP 1
JR Z ZAP1
CP 2
JR Z ZAP2
LD (IY+0),0A
RST 20
;integer out of range
;error code
ZAP1 LD BC,180
LD HL,10
JR ZAP3
ZAP2 LD BC,FEFF
LD HL,1820
ZAP3 LD DE,4
LD A,10
ZAP4 PUSH BC
PUSH DE
PUSH HL
PUSH AF
RST 10 BEEPER
;make short burst of tone
POP AF
POP HL
POP DE
POP BC
ADD HL,BC
;change frequency
DEC A
JR NZ ZAP4
JP END1
ZAP0 DI
LD A,(BORDCR)
RRCA
RRCA
RRCA
;A=border colour
LD H,4
LD B,(HL)
DEC HL
ZAP5 DJNZ ZAP6
;random delay to
;produce white noise
OUT FE,A
;activate speaker
XOR 10
;toggle speaker on/off
EX AF
LD A,H
OR L
JR Z ZAP7
EX AF
JR ZAP5
ZAP7 EI
JP END1

```


BASIC AT A STRETCH

RST 10h followed by the starting address (this is true for all the new command routines).

PRINTING PIXELS

The next routine allows a user-defined graphic character to be placed anywhere on-screen. The reason for restricting it to UDGs is that it's unlikely that anyone would want to print a lot of text like this (since the routine handles only one character at a time) and, if required, the UDGs may be re-defined as letters.

The syntax for the command is:

***PRINT x,y,c**

Where (x,y) are the pixel co-ordinates of the top left corner of the character (x lies between zero and 255, y between zero and 175) and c is the number of the UDG (UDG A is zero, UDG B is one . . . UDG U is 20). For example:

FOR x=0 TO 247: *PRINT x,100,0: NEXT x

The above will glide the first UDG (initially a capital 'A') across the screen. This time the extended syntax checker looks for three numbers separated by commas.

In the runtime routine, the data for the UDG is found and shifted across to give the correct information for the screen memory; the listing contains the code and full comments. The routine ends with the attribute bytes being set to the permanent colours.

PIXEL SCROLL

The scroll command allows pixel scrolling of the entire screen. The actual command is:

***SCROLL n**

Where n is a numeric expression controlling the direction of the scrolling (n must lie between zero and 255, but only the mod four value is used):

n=0 (or 4,8, . . .) scrolls right one pixel
n=1 (or 5,9, . . .) scrolls up
n=2 scrolls left
n=3 scrolls down

For example, to scroll one whole character down, you could use:

FOR I=1 TO 8: *SCROLL 3:NEXT I

This moves the screen by eight pixel lines. The syntax checker this time looks for only one numeric argument. Only the lower two bits are used (giving a range of zero to three) and the routine jumps to each separate scrolling routine. The left and right scrolls are fairly simple — they just shift each line of 32 bytes by one bit. The up and down scrolls are complicated by the layout of the screen memory, but all they do is move each line into the one above or below, clearing the final one.

The colour attributes are not affected at all, since they have only character block and not pixel resolution.

SIMPLE SOUNDS

The final routine is a simple sound effects generator — useful for games if nothing else. The command syntax is:

ROUTINE	VALUE	COMMENT
GETCHAR	18	Fetches current char on BASIC line into A
NXTCHAR	20	Fetches next char, ignoring spaces
ERR6	1F0	Normal error handler
STEND	5B7	Subroutine to exit command routine in syntax check time
END1	5C1	Routine to exit in runtime
EXPT1NM	1C82	Syntax checker for expecting a numeric expression (puts it on the stack)
FNDINT1	1E94	Fetches number into A from stack
BEEPER	3B5	Loudspeaker routine HL=437500/freq-30.125 DE=freq*duration
CHADD	74	Reads next character including spaces
BORDCR	+23624	System variable holding attributes for the lower screen and border
STACKA	2D28	Puts A on to the calculator stack
COORDS	+23677	System variable holding x & y co-ordinates of last point plotted
DRAWR	24BA	Relative draw routine, takes x & y offsets from BC & DE registers
PIXADD	22AA	Converts co-ords in BC to an address in HL
UDG	+23675	System variable holding address of user-defined graphics data
POATTR	BDB	Sets attributes for the screen byte in HL
TEMPS	D4D	Sets temporary colours (used by POATTR) to the permanent colours

The ROM routines and addresses used by the program.

***ZAP n**

Where n, between zero and two, specifies the type of sound:

n=0 gives an explosion noise
n=1 gives a falling tone
n=3 gives a rising tone

For example:

FOR I=1 TO 100: *ZAP INT(RND*3):NEXT I

The above will give several seconds of 'exciting' sounds (well, more exciting than BEEP!). The computer again looks for a single argument and checks its value; if it's out of range, it gives an error, otherwise it jumps to the specific routine. The rising and falling tones are produced by short beeps of changing frequencies, while the explosion is produced by sending 'random' data from the ROM to the speaker port.

A COMMANDING LEAD

You can check from the assembler listing several important points about adding new commands:

1. First, the syntax is checked — using EXPT1NM for numeric expressions and CP "," to check for separating commas. This section ends with CALL STEND.
2. Next comes the runtime routine and, since the values of the arguments are on the calculator stack, these can be pulled off into the A register with FNDINT1.
3. The runtime code ends with a jump to END1.
4. Any subroutine in the Basic ROM must be called via RST 10h. Note that all registers are preserved while the ROMs are paged.
5. Before the code will run, the vector at 23735 must point to the beginning, with a jump back to ERR6 at the end to trap genuine syntax errors.

The code may be entered using either an assembler or the Basic program provided which will relocate the 559 bytes of machine code anywhere in memory; it should run on a 16K Spectrum, so long as Interface 1 is connected.

To use it, set lines 10 and 20 to the desired starting address (for example, 31000 in a 16K machine and 64700 in a 48K model). Next SAVE the program in case there is a mistake (which is usually fatal in machine code). Now, RUN the program and after a few minutes a message will appear on the screen; the code has been located in memory but will have no effect since the vector at 23735 has not been altered. To use the extra commands enter the line in the message — as a single line rather than two separate POKEs, otherwise the machine may crash.

If NEW is entered the vector is reset; however, the code is still in memory, so repeat the two POKEs to allow the commands to be used. We've seen a simple interpreter that will allow up to 26 new commands, but with only four examples; there are 22 more possible words, so get working!

ASSEMBLER NOTES

The assembler used was the Artic version which, in fact, is slightly non-standard. The main differences between it and a standard assembler are:

EQU is replaced by the '=' sign.
All numbers are in hexadecimal unless preceded by '+' or '-', in which case they are in decimal.
DEFB, DEFW, and so on do not exist; the number or label is simply placed in the source text where the DEFB would occur, and EX AF,AF' is entered as EX AF. Ys

CHANNELS AND STREAMS

As promised in our July issue, Ian Beardsmore continues his quest to open up a new stream to a new channel. Read on and check out his progress...

Last issue, I was rambling on about streams and channels, hoping to excite the nerve endings of any readers out there who could help me in my quest to open up this little-known area of Spectrum knowledge. Well, for all those of you still asleep in the back row, I've managed to come up with most of the answers — so, this month, I will be providing you with a routine to open a new stream to a new channel!

OPENING TIME

Opening a stream can be performed simply though various POKes — the problem comes in creating a new channel. Whereas the streams area is absolute (the start of which is pointed to by the systems variable STRMS) the systems variable CHANS holds an address or vector which can, and does, move.

All this work was done on a Spectrum devoid of an Interface 1 unit, though the routine should be usable with said unit attached. Unexpanded, the Spectrum uses seven channels: -3 to -1 are for internal use, leaving Channels 0 to 3 for us to do something with. However, if we do use one of these it will have to be at the expense of the screen, keyboard or printer (yer pays yer money, etc). Much better, then, to create new space filled with channel data of our own channel — hence the need to CALL the 'make space' routine from the ROM!

As far as Sinclair Research is concerned the stream number is synonymous with the channel number, and as such is a source of confusion. While it's a useful rule of thumb, it's not a necessity. In theory, it would be quite possible to have, say, 16K of channel space... but there are limitations — namely that only stream and channel numbers between zero and 15 (inclusive) will be accepted. In the example I have given, the output routine of our new channel — Channel 4 — points to an

	ASSEMBLER	COMMENTS
This is a short set-up routine, making some room in memory for our new channel.	LD HL, (PROG)	Because the precise place we want within the channels area can be awkward to find, here is a little bit of cheating as we go in backward from PROG.
	DEC HL	This is a prerequisite of the CALL we are going to use.
	LD BC, 0005	Another prerequisite. This is the size of the space we want to make.
	CALL # 1655	This is a CALL to the 'make space' routine within the Spectrum's ROM. HL has to point to the first byte after the space and BC needs to hold the length of the space. When the program has RETURNed from the 'make space' routine, HL will hold the last byte of the space.
We can now fill our newly created space in the CHANS area with our own data. A check back to last month will reveal that the first two bytes will form the output routine (the one we will use), the next two form the input routine and lastly, the specifier (which must be K, S, R or P.) We will stick to Channel 3 and use 'P'.	INC HL	HL now holds the address of the first byte of our extra space.
	LDA, #94	The lowest significant byte (LSB) of our output routine.
	LD (HL), A	This is now loaded into the first of our free addresses.
	INC HL	The next of our extra addresses go into HL.
	PUSH HL	We are going to need this address again later.
	LD A, #F2	The most significant byte (MSB) of our routine.
	LD (HL), A	This is loaded into its allocated address.
	INC HL	The next free address — the start of the input routine.
	LD A, #C4	The LSB of the input error routine,
	LD (HL), A	Which is stored away.
	INC HL	The next free address,
	LD A, #15	And the MSB for it,
	LD (HL), A	Is stored away.
	INC HL	The next address,
	LD A, #50	Is the code for the letter 'P', our specifier.
	LD (HL), A	Without a recognized specifier, we would go to an error routine whether we wanted to or not.
Having made the space of our channel and loaded it with the data we want, the offset has to be found so that it can be stored in the STRMS area.	POP HL	The first address plus one of the extra space that we stored with a PUSH earlier.
	LD DE, (CHANS)	The vector that will return the start address of the channels area to DE.
	AND A	Clears the carry flag ready for calculation.
	SBC HL, DE	The difference between the start of the channels area and the start of the extra space we've made becomes our offset; it's currently held in HL.
	EX DE, HL	We need to keep the offset, but HL is in demand for other things. A simple swap, then, is the answer. HL is free for other uses, and the offset is in DE. All that's needed now is to find the place in STRMS where the channel offset can be stored.
	LD HL, 'STRMS'	This is not a vector, and has to be loaded as an absolute value or else HL will be incremented.
	LD A, 4	The stream we are interested in goes into the A register.
	ADD A, 3	This allows for Streams -3 to -1.
	ADD A, A	Each of the seven streams that come into use on powering up the Speccy have two bytes of offset data allocated to them. The total number of bytes they occupy is now in the accumulator and forms our streams offset for Stream 4.
	LD B, 0	It must not be forgotten that, even though we're using low value offsets, an offset can still be a two-byte number and in these cases must be treated as such.
	LD C, A	The LSB of the offset.
	ADD HL, BC	The streams offset is added to the streams base address, to give the location we want in the streams area.
	LD (HL), E	The LSB of our channel offset goes into the lower of the streams addresses.
	INC HL	Points to the next streams address.
	LD (HL), D	Loads that address with the MSB of our channel offset.
	RET	RETURNS to Basic.

CHANNELS AND STREAMS

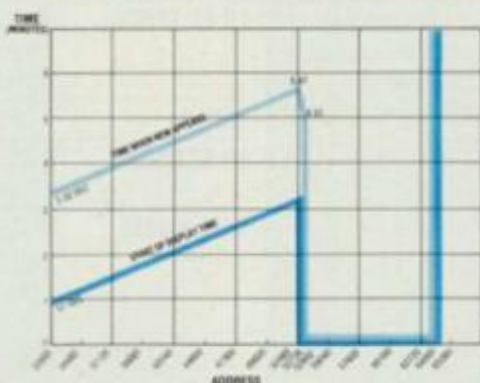
address 62100, where it is presumed that a routine of our own devising would be stored.

A note about offsets is also needed. An offset is a number that, when added to the base address of a block of data, will give you the address to start working from. The routine included in this article uses two offsets: one a channel offset, to show where the channel data for our routine starts; the other, a streams offset, is the number of bytes into the streams area that the above offset is stored.

I said last month I was hoping to assemble a routine that would allow you to attach your own streams to your own channels — the channels being your own routines. This proved even more awkward than I had expected and took some time to accomplish. For the present, I'll only give the assembly listing and explanation.

One point to keep in mind when trying to CLOSE channels greater than Channel 3 — there's no endstop marker on the Lookup Table, which might just have some of you whizzing merrily through the ROM until the program finds some number that's acceptable. [VS]

CRASH THEORY CONTINUED



Further investigations into the 'Fun Crash' I gave you last month (well, it's a lot less energetic than a Fun Run!) have shown that CLEAR 64000 is not quite unique, even though it does seem to have some properties that are distinctly its own. But, in fact, a similar effect can be obtained with these addresses — 33024, 41472 and 51465; can anyone spot what they have in common? If highly intelligent readers of *Your Spectrum* cannot, then no one will. And what if I add a couple more addresses that can also be used, such as: 32000, 32256, 32512, 49152...?

Yes, no prizes for knowing that any address with a low byte value of 00 Hex will produce a similar sort of crash, though with nothing like the same spectacular pattern. I started to wonder

what was so special about every 256th number that it produces a screen display, whereas any other (leastways, the others I've tried) results in a simple crash. Then I discovered that the incomparable Sir Clive had another trick up his sleeve — my fine theory itself crashes, literally, at address 52736.

So far as I know, only one address above this produces a display before the crash — when the computer NEWs itself — and that's the well-tried (and far more interesting) 64000. But, hang on... "Before the computer crashes and NEWs itself...", do I hear you exclaim? That wasn't mentioned before! Well, I was just testing your alertness. The fact is that though 64000 seems to produce a continuous display, all the other addresses mentioned earlier do it to a regular time sequence.

Here's a very exciting graph — well, maybe not that exciting, but still quite interesting. The y axis represents time in minutes, and the x axis the address (always remembering that only every 256th address applies). There's a clear relationship between when the display starts coming up on-screen and when it NEWs itself. Obviously, the three addresses — 52480, 52736 and 52992 — are the interesting ones, as here the pattern is completely broken, never to be repeated. I have left the 64000 display on for half an hour without it NEWing, so I make the assumption that it's permanent.

Now, all I want are some explanations... any takers?

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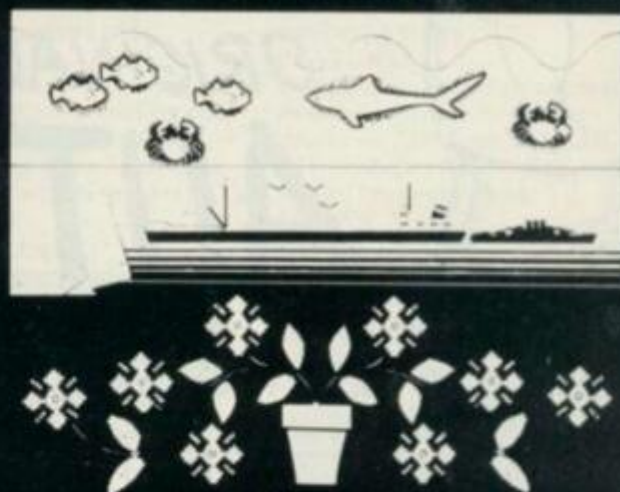
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VOL 1/1 (DEC/JAN 1984)

REVIEWS

Currah's MicroSpeech, general computing books, programmable joysticks, alternatives to Basic.

FEATURES

Speech synthesis, Toni Baker's machine code break-out, Spectrum communications, DIY keyboard buffer, machine code scrolling.

GAMES

Chess packages.



VOL 1/2 (FEB/MAR 1984)

REVIEWS

Printer interfaces, QL — the first impressions, machine code textbooks.

FEATURES

Software protection, machine code jumping, Spectrum tuning, DIY SoftROM, bugs in the Microdrive ROM, system variable guide (pt. 1).

GAMES

The Ant Attack map.



VOL 1/3 (APR/MAY 1984)

REVIEWS

Basicare add-ons, educational books, SuperBasic.

FEATURES

Sexing your Spectrum, extending Basic, 3D plotting (pt. 1), ZIP compiler (pt. 1), system variable guide (pt. 2).

GAMES

Durell Software's *Scuba Dive*.



VOL 1/4 (JUNE 1984)

REVIEWS

Spectrum disk drives, QL roadtest, adventure programming books.

FEATURES

DIY joystick interface, synthesiser control, ZIP compiler (pt. 2), colour simulation screen dumps, 3D plotting (pt. 2).

GAMES

Hacker's review plus full map of *Jet Set Willy*.



VOL 1/5 (JULY 1984)

REVIEWS

British Micro's Grafpad, DIY computing books.

FEATURES

Computerised bulletin boards and modems, software for printer interfaces, ZIP compiler (pt. 3), DIY joystick interface, Z80 versus 68000, Spectrum piano.

GAMES

Gilsoft's *The Quill*.



VOL 1/6 (AUGUST 1984)

REVIEWS

Spectrum toolkits, games programming books.

FEATURES

Hacking into *Jet Set Willy*, explosion routines, ZIP compiler (pt. 4), files on Microdrive, DIY Centronics interface (pt. 1).

GAMES

Ultimate's *Sabre Wulf*.

THOUGHTS & CROSSES

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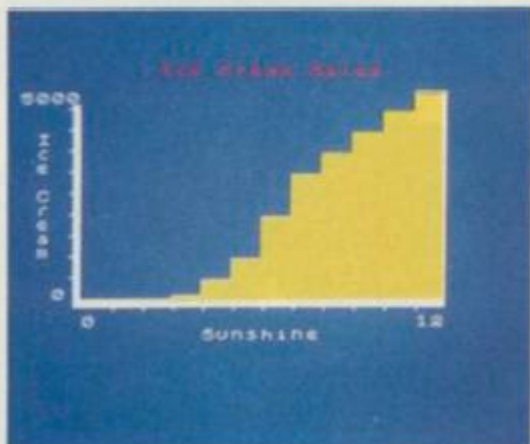
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			Ometron	S/Proj	5.95	5.35	Ultimate	5.95	5.35	Et Assembler	Picturesque	8.50	7.65	Sling 64	Q/Silver	7.95	7.15	Crazy Kong	Supersoft	7.95	7.15		
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			The Pyramid	Fantasy	5.50	4.95	Ultimate	5.50	4.95	Devil Riders in	Camell	5.95	5.35	Frugru	Anirog	5.95	5.35	Dictator 64	DKT	5.95	5.35		
			Doomday Castle	Fantasy	6.50	5.85	Ultimate	6.50	5.85	St Bernard	Camnell	5.95	5.35	3D Time Trek	Anirog	7.95	7.15	Dinky Doo	S/Projects	7.95	7.15		
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PROGRAM POWER

Parcel up your programs and send them to Program Power, Your Spectrum, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.

BUSINESS GRAPHICS

BY JOHN TYDEMAN



The bar chart shown here has been created using the *Business Graphics* program and can be either hatched (shaded) or completely filled in, as well as totally redrawn using a different format such as histogram or line graph. You can also use the program to overlay different graphs in much the same way as *Easel* does.

With the QL looming so high on the micro horizon, many of you out there must have looked at the bundled software that comes free with the machine with something akin to envy. Well, don't fret... here's a program which can produce graphs and charts, à la *Easel*.

This package will allow you to create graphics of any data you care to type in; several formats are offered, including block line graphs, bar charts, straight line graphs, bar charts and histograms. You can also fill above and/or below the graphs with colour, either as a solid fill or 'hatching'; there are 17 different shades of 'hatch' allowed. Once the graph/chart has been drawn, you can overlay another of a similar or different format, add labels (letters only can be positioned anywhere on the screen), SAVE it to tape, COPY it to a printer or start again — the choice is yours.

The program comes complete with comprehensive instructions on how to enter data, and is menu-driven to boot. A word of advice though, to start with don't try to draw too many graphs at once; it's something that needs a little planning to achieve the best results. Also, be restrained in the use of colour and 'hatch' options until you're familiar with the program, otherwise it could lead to some confusion. If the filling-in options run too slow for your purpose, try speeding them up with the Softek *FP Compiler* — you'll find it's fully compatible.

```
10 REM BUSINESS GRAPHICS
90 REM SET VARIABLES
100 LET h=0
110 LET c1=0
120 LET c=0
150 LET t=0
160 LET co=0
170 POKE 23609,185
180 LET k1=0
200 INK 5: PAPER 0: BORDER 0
310 CLS
```

Lines 90-310 Define certain variables, POKE in a keyboard bleep, set the screen attributes and clear the screen.

```
590 REM MENU
600 PRINT INVERSE 1; "*****MENU*****"
610 PRINT AT 4,0; "[1] Single or Multiple Line Graph - Variable Entry Both Axis"
620 PRINT AT 8,0; "[2] Block Line Graphs-Multiple Entry - Variable Entry Ver
```

```
tical Axis"
630 PRINT AT 12,0; "[3] Solid Deviation Bar Chart suitable for Income / Expenditure and Max / Min."
640 PRINT AT 16,0; "[4] Open Deviation Bar Chart"
650 PRINT AT 18,0; "[5] Histogram"
660 PRINT AT 20,0; "[6] Instructions"
```

Lines 590-660 Print the main menu, offering a choice of five graphs or instructions.

```
700 INPUT "SELECT APPROPRIATE NUMBER ";ta
702 IF ta=6 THEN GO TO 8900
```

Lines 700-702 Select the type of graph; if you choose option six (instructions), the program GOSUBs to line 8900.

```
703 REM DRAW GRID
705 INPUT "background colour (0-7)";bc: PAPER bc: BORDER bc: CLS
730 INPUT "COLOUR OF GRID ? (0 TO 7)";z: INK z
740 INPUT "TYPE OF GRID? :RECT.=(1) : L=(2) : ONE=(3) ";gr: IF gr=1 THEN GO TO 1000
750 IF gr=3 THEN CLS: GO SUB 1025: REM TITLES
```

Lines 703-750 Select the grid type and colour.

```
760 IF gr=3 THEN INPUT "MAX VERTICAL VALUE? ";a: LET x=a: INPUT "No.ENTRIES/MAX HORIZ VAL ";a: LET y=a: GO TO 3068
770 CLS
810 FOR n=3 TO 17: PRINT INK z;AT n,3; "I": NEXT n: PRINT INK z;AT 18,3; " "
820 FOR n=4 TO 27: PRINT INK z;AT 18,n; "I": NEXT n
830 GO TO 1025
1005 CLS: FOR n=4 TO 27: PRINT AT 2,n; "I":AT 18,n; "I": NEXT n
1010 FOR n=3 TO 17: PRINT AT n,3; "I":AT n,28; "I": NEXT n
1020 PRINT AT 2,3; "I":AT 2,28; "I":AT 18,3; "I":AT 18,28; "I"
```

Lines 760-1020 Input values for vertical and horizontal scales, clear the screen and draw the graphs with scales.

```
1025 INPUT "TITLE INK COLOUR? ";i
1030 INPUT "TITLE (22)";f$
1036 LET n=4+(INT (24-LEN f$)/2)
1040 PRINT INK i;AT 1,n;f$
1050 INPUT "TITLE VERT. AX. (12)";h$
1060 LET nh=2+(INT (16-LEN h$)/2)
1065 IF gr=1 THEN FOR m=1 TO LEN h$: PRINT AT nh,30;h$(m): LET nh=nh+1: NEXT m
1066 LET nh=2+(INT (16-LEN h$)/2)
1070 FOR m=1 TO LEN h$: PRINT AT nh,1;h$(m): LET nh=nh+1: NEXT m
1080 INPUT "TITLE HOR. AX. (22)";v$
1090 PRINT AT 20,4+(INT (24-LEN v$)/2);v$
1095 IF gr=3 THEN RETURN
```

Lines 1025-1095 Input graph and scale titles, the chosen colour, and print them justified on the screen.

```
3000 INPUT "MAX VAL VERT AXIS ";x: INPUT "MAX VAL HOR AXIS ";y
3010 PRINT AT 19,4; "0";AT 17,2; "0"
```


PROGRAM POWER

```

3020 PRINT AT 19,28-LEN STR$ y;y
3030 LET v=3-LEN STR$ x: IF v<0 THEN LET v=0
3035 PRINT AT 3,v;x
3050 INPUT "NUMBER DIVISIONS IN VERT AXIS":a
3055 LET b=120/a: FOR n=1 TO (a-1): PLOT INK
z:28,INT (n*b)+33: DRAW INK z;-2,0: NEXT n:
IF gr=1 THEN FOR n=1 TO (a-1): PLOT INK z:
228,INT (n*b)+33: DRAW INK z;2,0: NEXT n
3060 INPUT "No.ENTRIES/DIVS. IN HORZ AXIS":a
3065 LET b=192/a: FOR n=1 TO (a-1): PLOT INK
z:INT (n*b)+33,28: DRAW INK z;0,-2: NEXT n:
IF gr=1 THEN FOR n=1 TO (a-1): PLOT INK z:
INT (n*b)+33,156: DRAW INK z;0,2: NEXT n

```

Lines 3000-3065 Input horizontal and vertical values, and the number of divisions/entries. This routine then prints the markers.

```

3067 REM GOSUB DRAW GRAPH ROUTINES
3068 IF ta=5 THEN GO SUB 6000
3069 IF ta=3 OR ta=4 THEN GO SUB 5000
3070 IF ta=1 OR ta=2 THEN GO SUB 3500

```

Lines 3067-3070 GOSUB to draw the type of graph selected.

```

3200 REM OPTIONS - FILL - ANOTHER GRAPH - LA
BELS - SAVE - COPY
3210 PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"FILL BELOW GRAPH (Y/N)
": P
AUSE 0: IF INKEY#="y" OR INKEY#="Y" THEN INP
UT "INK?":z: INPUT "Hatching:1(solid) to 16(o
pen)":ha: GO SUB 8200
3220 PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"FILL ABOVE? GRAPH (Y/N)
": PAUSE 0: IF INKEY#="y" OR INKEY#="Y" THE
N INPUT "INK?":z: INPUT "Hatching:1(solid)
to 16(open)":ha: GO SUB 8300
3225 PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"OVERLAY ANOTHER GRAPH (
Y/N)": PAUSE 0: IF INKEY#="y" OR INKEY#="Y"
THEN INPUT "SELECT GRAPH TYPE (1-5)":ta: GO
TO 3068
3230 PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"ADD LABELS?
(Y/N)": PAUSE 0: IF INKEY#="y" OR INKEY#="Y"
THEN PAUSE 10: GO SUB 8600
3250 PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"HARD COPY?
": P
AUSE 0: IF INKEY#="y" OR INKEY#="Y" THEN INP
UT "": COPY
3300 PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"COPY ON TAPE?": PAUSE
0: IF INKEY#="y" OR INKEY#="Y" THEN INPUT ""
: SAVE "graph"CODE 16384,6912
3350 PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"DRAW ANOTHER GRAPH?": P
AUSE 0: IF INKEY#="y" OR INKEY#="Y" THEN CL
AR: GO TO 100

```

Lines 3200-3350 Once the graph is drawn, you are offered a number of options: 1) Is shading required above and/or below the graph?; 2) Is another graph to be overlayed?; and finally, 3) Is the graph to be SAVED to tape?

```

3400 STOP: REM END OF PROGRAM

```

Lines 3400 The end of the program.

```

3690 REM DRAW GRAPHS 1 & 2
3700 INPUT "Colour of Graph?":w:
3750 IF ta=2 THEN GO SUB 4500: RETURN: REM
GRAPH 2
4005 INPUT "FIRST VERTICAL ":c
4006 LET c=INT (c*(119/x))+32
4007 IF c>151 THEN LET c=150
4008 IF c<=32 THEN LET c=33
4010 LET t=32: PLOT INK w;t,c
4020 LET o=t: LET b=c
4060 INPUT "Vertical ":c;,"Horizontal ":t
4070 IF t=0 THEN GO TO 4120
4080 LET t=INT (t*(191/y))+32: LET c=INT (c*(
119/x))+32
4085 IF c=32 THEN LET c=33

```

Lines 3690-4085 Get the colour of graphs 1 and 2. If graph 2, the program skips lines 4005-4210 which are for graph 1 only.

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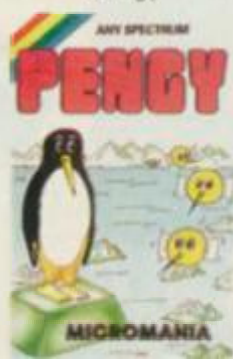
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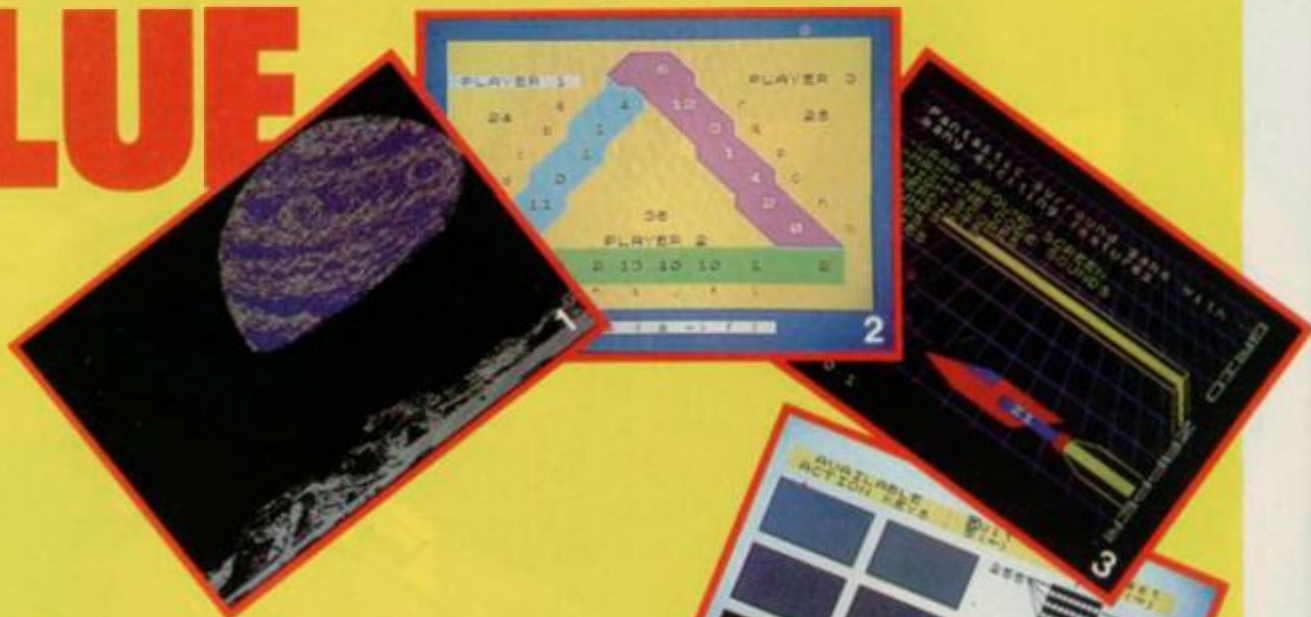
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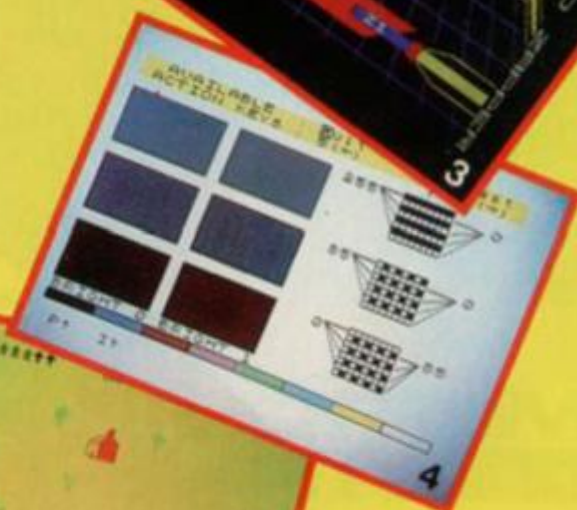
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PROGRAM POWER

```
4090 IF t>223 OR c>151 OR t<0 OR c<32 THEN P
RINT #0;AT 0,0;"INVALID ENTRY.TRY AGAIN.": BE
EP 1,1: PAUSE 100: GO TO 4060
```

Line 4090 Rejects data if outside the program's range.

```
4100 DRAW INK w;t-a,c-b
```

Line 4100 Draws part of the graph.

```
4105 PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"TO CORRECT PRESS C : Nex
t Graph Press N: ANY OTHER KEY CONTINUE. ": P
AUSE 0: IF INKEY#="C" OR INKEY#="c" THEN INV
ERSE 1: PLOT t,c: DRAW -((t-a)),-(c-b)): INV
ERSE 0: PLOT INK w;o,b: GO TO 4060
4106 IF INKEY#="n" OR INKEY#="N" THEN GO TO
4120
4109 LET a=t: LET b=c
4110 BEEP 1/10,1/10: GO TO 4060
4210 RETURN
```

Lines 4105-4210 This routine provides an option to delete the last entry. The use of '1/10' and not '0.1' is to enable the use of Softek's FP Compiler.

```
4500 REM DRAW GRAPH
4510 LET t=32
4520 INPUT "Vertical";c
4540 LET c=INT (c*(119/x))+32
4550 IF c>151 THEN LET c=150
4560 IF c<32 THEN LET c=33
4562 PLOT INK w;t,c
4563 FOR n=1 TO (a-1)
4565 LET t=INT 192/a
4570 DRAW INK w;t,0
4571 IF n>1 THEN PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"TO CORRECT
PRESS C : QUIT = Q : ANY OTHER KEY TO CONTI
NUE ": PAUSE 0: IF INKEY#="C" OR INKEY#="c"
THEN PLOT INVERSE 1: PEEK 23677,PEEK 236
78: LET n=n-1: INVERSE 1: DRAW INK w;-t,0: D
RAW INK w;o,-(c-c1): INVERSE 0: GO TO 4575
4573 LET c1=c
4574 IF INKEY#="Q" THEN GO TO 10
4575 INPUT "Vertical";c
4581 LET c=INT (c*(119/x))+32
4592 IF c>151 OR c<32 THEN PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"
INVALID ENTRY.TRY AGAIN.": BEEP 1,1: PAUSE 10
0: GO TO 4575
4590 DRAW INK w;o,c-c1
4600 NEXT n
4605 DRAW INK w;223-PEEK 23677,0
4700 RETURN
```

Lines 4500-4700 This routine controls the drawing of graph 2. Notice the PEEKs in line 4571, which address the system variables to delete the last point plotted.

```
5000 REM DRAW GRAPHS 3 & 4
5010 LET t=INT 192/(a*4)
5015 INPUT "COLOUR FOR POSITIVE? (1 - 7)";ca:
INPUT "COLOUR FOR NEGATIVE? (1 - 7)";cb
5020 FOR n=0 TO a-1
5030 INPUT "FIRST VALUE? ";c: INPUT "SECOND
VALUE? ";f
5031 IF f>x OR f<0 OR c>x OR c<0 THEN PRINT
#0;AT 0,0;"INVALID ENTRY.TRY AGAIN.": BEEP 1,
1: PAUSE 100: GO TO 5030
5035 IF c>=f THEN LET i=ca
5036 IF c<f THEN LET i=cb
5040 LET c=INT ((119*c)/x): LET f=INT ((119*f
)/x)
5041 IF c+32>150 THEN LET c=c-1
5042 IF f+32>150 THEN LET f=f-1
5045 LET t=INT ((n*(192/a))+((192/(a*4))))
5050 IF ta=3 THEN FOR m=0 TO INT (192/(a*2))
: PLOT INK i;t+32,f+32: DRAW INK i;0,c-f: L
ET t=t+1: NEXT m
5060 IF ta=4 THEN PLOT INK i;t+32,f+32: DRA
```

```
W INK i;0,c-f: DRAW INK i;INT (192/(a*2)),0
: DRAW INK i;0,-(c-f): DRAW INK i;-INT (192
/(a*2)),0
5070 IF i=0 THEN LET n=n-1: NEXT n
5080 IF k1=1 THEN LET k1=0: INVERSE 0: GO TO
5030
5100 PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"TO CORRECT PRESS C : Q
UIT = Q : ANY OTHER KEY TO CONTINUE ": P
AUSE 0: IF INKEY#="C" OR INKEY#="c" THEN INV
ERSE 1: LET k1=1: GO TO 5045
5110 IF INKEY#="Q" OR INKEY#="q" THEN CLS :
CLEAR : GO TO 1
5210 NEXT n
5220 RETURN
```

Lines 5000-5220 The routine controlling the graphic construction of graphs 3 and 4.

```
6000 REM DRAW GRAPH 5
6010 INPUT "Colour of Graph? ";w:
6020 LET t=32
6030 FOR n=1 TO a
6040 PLOT INK w;t,32
6050 INPUT "VERTICAL? ";c
6057 IF c>x OR c<0 THEN PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"INV
ALID ENTRY.TRY AGAIN.": BEEP 1,1: PAUSE 100:
GO TO 6050
6060 LET c=INT (c*(119/x))
6070 IF c>151 THEN LET c=150
6100 LET ti=INT 192/a
6110 DRAW INK w;o,c: DRAW INK w;ti-1,0: DRA
W INK w;o,-c
6160 PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"TO CORRECT PRESS C : Q
UIT = Q : ANY OTHER KEY TO CONTINUE ": P
AUSE 0: IF INKEY#="C" OR INKEY#="c" THEN INV
ERSE 1: DRAW INK w;o,c: DRAW INK w;-ti-1,
0: DRAW INK w;o,-c: INVERSE 0: GO TO 6050
6170 IF INKEY#="Q" OR INKEY#="q" THEN CLS :
CLEAR : GO TO 1
6180 LET t=t+ti
6190 NEXT n
6200 RETURN
```

Lines 6000-6200 The routine controlling graph 5. (The first part of lines 6160, 5100, 4571 and 4105 is the same, should this have been in the subroutine?)

```
6205 REM FILL ABOVE
6210 FOR n=33 TO 222 STEP ha: LET b=0
6220 IF POINT (n,b+32) THEN GO TO 6250
6230 IF b=117 THEN GO TO 6250
6240 LET b=b+1: GO TO 6220
6250 PLOT INK z;n,32: DRAW INK z;0,b: NEXT
n
6260 RETURN
6300 REM FILL BELOW
6310 FOR n=33 TO 222 STEP ha: LET b=151
6320 IF POINT (n,b) THEN GO TO 6350
6330 IF b=32 THEN GO TO 6350
6340 LET b=b-1: GO TO 6320
6350 PLOT INK z;n,150: DRAW INK z;0,-(149-(
b-1)): NEXT n
6360 RETURN
```

Lines 6205-8360 The fill routines. (These fill above and below the graph and are very slow. If you are going to use them a lot you may like to speed them up a bit. Try placing them at the start of the program).

```
8590 REM ADD LABELS
8600 BEEP 1/20,1/20
8610 PRINT #0;AT 0,0;"Move Cursor (5-6) Ente
r to QuitNo number/graphics:Delete=Space"
8615 LET x=1: LET y=1
8620 PRINT OVER 1: INK B;AT x,y;"*": PAUSE 3
: PRINT OVER 1: INK B;AT x,y;"*"
8630 LET t#INKEY#
8640 IF t#="7" THEN LET x=x-1: IF x<=0 THEN
```


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PROGRAM POWER

```

LET x=0: BEEP 1/50,1/50: GO TO 8620
8650 IF t#="8" THEN LET y=y+1: IF y>=31 THEN
  LET y=31: BEEP 1/50,1/50: GO TO 8620
8660 IF t#="5" THEN LET y=y-1: IF y<=0 THEN
  LET y=0: BEEP 1/50,1/50: GO TO 8620
8670 IF t#="6" THEN LET x=x+1: IF x>=21 THEN
  LET x=21: BEEP 1/50,1/50: GO TO 8620
8680 IF t#="CHR# (13)" THEN RETURN
8700 IF CODE t#>=32 AND CODE t#<=47 OR CODE t
  #>=58 AND CODE t#<=127 THEN PRINT INK 9: PA
  PER 8: AT x,y,t#: BEEP 1/10,1/10: LET y=y+1: I
  F y>=31 THEN LET y=31: GO TO 8620
8800 GO TO 8620
  
```

Lines 8590-8800 Add labels to the completed graph. Lines 8630-8670 check for the cursor keys being pressed and move the cursor. Line 8700 inputs text at the cursor.

```

8900 REM INSTRUCTIONS
8910 CLS
8920 PRINT INVERSE 1;"INSTRUCTIONS": PRINT
8930 PRINT "BUSINESS GRAPHICS is a program d
  esigned to produce charts and graphs. The re
  sultant display may be photographed to prod
  uce lecture slides, copied to tape, or print
  ed.": PRINT
8940 PRINT "Upon entering the program you w
  ill be presented with a Menu offering a cho
  ice of two graph and three chart modes": PRI
  NT
8950 PRINT "The program offers a choice of g
  rid, vertical scale, and number of entries. Yo
  ur own Titles will also be printed. These shou
  ld be limited to 22 characters for horizonta
  l and 12 for vertical.": PRINT
8960 PRINT #0; AT 0,0;"ANY KEY TO CONTINUE": P
  AUSE 0
8970 CLS
  
```

Lines 8900-8970 The first page of instructions; these are printed page by page. Notice how lines 8920, 8960 and 8970 appear five times — the use of a subroutine would have been much better.)

```

8980 PRINT INVERSE 1;"INSTRUCTIONS": PRINT
8990 PRINT "At various stages you will be g
  iven the option to overlay another graph
  or chart of your choice from the menu.": PRI
  NT
9000 PRINT "You will be given the option to d
  elete the last entry when entering data.
  ": PRINT
9010 PRINT "Ink colour may be selected t
  hroughout the program and there is an initial
  option to select the background colour.
  Use of colour should be restrained for the
  best results particularly where different
  graphs will be close to one another": PRINT
9020 PRINT #0; AT 0,0;"ANY KEY TO CONTINUE": P
  AUSE 0
9030 CLS
  
```

Lines 8980-9030 Page 2 of the instructions.

```

9040 PRINT INVERSE 1;"INSTRUCTIONS": PRINT
9050 PRINT "After drawing a graph you m
  ay choose to fill above or below the grap
  h and enter simple labels.": PRINT
9060 PRINT INVERSE 1;"GRAPH SELECTION": PRI
  NT
9070 PRINT "Graph (1) is a simple line graphw
  hich permits variable selected entry on the v
  ertical and horizontal axis. All the ot
  her modes require a defined number of entri
  es for the horizontal axis.": PRINT
9080 PRINT "Charts (3) and (4) permit two s
  ets of data to be entered together. If t
  he second entry exceeds the first the graph
  will be a different colour."
  
```

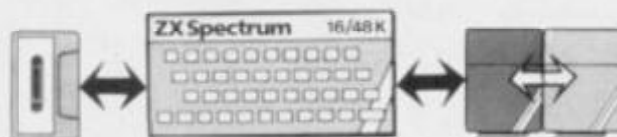
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PROGRAM POWER

440	OVER	LD DE,HEAR	These lines carry out the check for the 'out of data' space.
450		PUSH HL	
460		AND A	
470		SBC HL,DE	
480		POP HL	
490		RET	
500	:		System variable.
510	RAMTP	EQU 23730	
520	:		
530	:		
540	:	END	

If you haven't an assembler at hand, use the following Hex loader program and enter the Chip Chat data given.

```
10 CLEAR 65099: LET tot=0
20 FOR a=65100 TO 65181 STEP 5: PRINT a:":
": FOR h=0 TO 4: INPUT byte: POKE h+a,byte:
PRINT byte:": LET tot=tot+byte: NEXT h: PR
INT : NEXT a
30 IF tot<>11987 THEN PRINT "There's an
error!": BEEP .2,-4: STOP
40 SAVE "speechcode"CODE 65100,82
```

```
65100: 255 243 42 178 92
65105: 35 6 8 62 127
65110: 219 254 31 48 18
65115: 203 111 219 254 32
65120: 14 203 254 203 6
65125: 16 237 35 205 149
65130: 254 56 229 251 201
65135: 203 190 24 240 255
65140: 243 42 178 92 35
65145: 6 8 203 126 219
65150: 254 32 16 203 167
65155: 211 254 203 6 16
65160: 242 35 205 149 254
65165: 56 234 251 201 203
65170: 231 24 238 17 76
65175: 254 229 167 237 82
65180: 225 201 80 0 0
```

The data for the Chip Chat program — to be entered using the Hex loader above.

PROGRAMMING ON SPEC

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INPUT/ OUTPUT

71

Sinclair Research breaks the time-honoured tradition of 'never having to say sorry' over lunch at the Carlton Tower Hotel. Roger Munford reveals the proceedings.

Holed up in a luxury suite of the Carlton Tower Hotel, high above London's West End, the crème de la crème of computer scribes (or so they'd like to think) sat down for lunch with Sir Clive Sinclair, plus henchmen Nigel Searle and David Karlin. Reason for the summit? To 'put the story straight' about the QL. Therefore, pulled in at no extra cost was king of the bundled software, David Potter of Psion.

"Reports in the press contained errors which we feel may be our fault — and this concerns us as any error in the British press will be seen around the world", began Sir Clive. The patriotic slant proved something of a tone-setter. "Putting the record straight" then switched to something of a slag-off of IBM, Acorn and Commodore — all of which, he claimed, had been equally (if not more) late with their own products. Warming to his theme, Sir Clive went on to tell us of the ecstatic welcome the QL had received in Japan and the US. Why, he inferred, couldn't the British press get it right!

Arming himself with a slide projector, Nigel Searle then attempted to allay fears that the QL was running behind schedule. He said the 28-day delivery should be okay by the time you read this and that there'll be an extensive revision of the User Guide by August — plus faster turnaround of upgraded QLs. He expects too to be announcing additional manufacturers of the add-ons soon. More interesting news is the fact that the 68000 family could be the one on which Sinclair Research will be basing its products for the next decade — "and it wouldn't surprise me if the 68000 was used into the decade after as well", quoth Searle.

Getting on to Microdrives (wake up all you Spectrum users) Searle asserted the simple market truth that once the demand goes up, then the price will come down. "I can't say when or how much, but it'll be significant". He went on to confirm that, yes, there have been the obvious comparisons with disks, but the techniques employed with Microdrives could eventually give them the technology to produce storage of up to 1M; that, apparently, is still on the drawing board.

Additional hardware



LUNCH WITH SIR CLIVE

support for the QL will include 128K RAM, 512K RAM, Winchester hard disk unit, modem and terminal emulator, monitor, printer and IEEE 488 interface. However, Searle wouldn't be drawn into the big question of 'when?'. Perhaps the company is going to wait and see what other manufacturers are going to do, and then just fill in the gaps.

Ending the presentation, Nigel Searle pronounced the QL to be a potential 'million seller' — 250,000 this year and 750,000 in 1985.

David Karlin has obviously

picked up a few pointers from his boss on how to tackle the 'difficult' questions. Dealing with some of the more pedantic queries from those assembled, on the tricky subject of software bugs Karlin told us "of course, 'silly and convoluted' things will crash the machine — if you get the answer wrong through a 'complicated' expression, then this is not significant.... no Basic ever written is perfect — within that we are perfect".

And talking of getting 'complicated', David Potter managed to get himself in a

mighty tangle over whether the Psion packages were 'multi-tasking' or 'concurrent'. Once he'd suitably defined the two in a way that showed the QL to be multi-tasking, the point was raised that it would be near impossible for the average punter to be able to do it anyway. David Karlin noted "the facilities are there for the software houses — and I believe that users who require it will learn 68000 machine code language". Hmmm.

Perhaps the whole point of the exercise was that Sinclair Research wanted to say sorry for being so late — certainly the press boys gave them every chance, again and again... even to the point where, in a harassed moment, Sir Clive was heard to emit the strangled cry, "For God's sake, we're going to do it better". In the continuing barrage, Sir Clive went on, "we're not at all happy that we let people down. It takes a long time to launch a product — it's all a bit of a balancing act which we got slightly wrong. But the way we got it wasn't as bad as the opposition." Again, a loose reference to companies like Amstrad (which, according to Sir Clive, have introduced "an old-fashioned computer").

It was left to Nigel Searle to make Sinclair Research's peace. "I think honestly that it's very easy to have 20:20 hindsight — we could all do it better again. The difficult thing is to design products now which will be good in 1986. Nobody wants flak — and we get it in barrels. We didn't want to be late this time, and we don't want to be late in the future."

That, one would imagine, is the final apology and, thankfully, Searle resisted any reference to 'other' companies; if the other companies don't want to say sorry for their lateness, then that's their bad manners — unless you're NANDing in Boolean, two wrongs still don't make a right. Sinclair Research 'suffers' from having a man at the top who is known throughout the world, and it's always 'nicer' to knock a person than a faceless company. On the other hand, you could argue that Sinclair Research wouldn't be in the position it's in now without the figurehead — a paradox which suggests those with a swings and roundabouts asset should learn to say sorry *nicely*.

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